DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 302 869 CS 506 525

AUTHOR Ortiz-Seda, Darnyd W
TITLE The Use of Creative Dramatics in the Teaching of Drama with Special Application to the Teaching of English as a Second Language.
PUB DATE 84
NOTE 119p.; Master's Thesis, University of Puerto Rico.
PUB TYPE Dissertations/Theses - Master Theses (042) -- Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Guides - Classroom Use - Guides (For Teachers) (052)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC05 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS College Freshmen; *Creative Dramatics; *Drama; *English (Second Language); Higher Education; High School Seniors; Literary Criticism; *Literary Devices; Teaching Methods
IDENTIFIERS *Literary Theory; *Performance Analysis

ABSTRACT

Since performance is the main difference between drama and fiction, it should be included in drama instruction in order to give students a complete view of what drama really is. Accordingly, a series of theatrical techniques to teach four elements of drama--plot, character, setting, and mood--were elaborated. Improvisations, pantomimes, extrapolation or expanding a character, and role playing are included among the activities, on the premise that the use of performance techniques should be incorporated with the standard methods of literary analysis and taught simultaneously to help students better comprehend plays. This theory is illustrated with exercises used to teach two plays, William Shakespeare's "The Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet," and Thornton Wilder's "The Matchmaker." These plays were chosen because they presented concrete characters and situations that the students could recognize as real. In addition, genre, historical period, technical devices, and audience were considered in making the choices. These suggestions and exercises are well suited to ordinary high school students and/or freshman college students who are learning English as a Second Language (ESL). Guidelines for teachers who would like to use the activities in their classrooms are included. (Sixty-one references are attached.) (RAE)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED302869

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Darnyd W Ortiz Seda

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

THE USE OF CREATIVE DRAMATICS IN THE TEACHING OF [illegible] WITH SPECIAL APPLICATION TO THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

by

Darnyd W Ortiz Seda

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

in

ENGLISH EDUCATION

UNIVERSITY OF PUERTO RICO
MAYAGUEZ CAMPUS

1984

Approved by:

Member, Graduate Committee	Date May 6, 84
Member, Graduate Committee	Date May 10, 1984
President, Graduate Committee	Date May 10, 1984
Representative of Graduate Studies	Date May 10, 1984
Chairperson of the Department	Date May 10, 1984
Director of Graduate Studies	Date 29 May 1984

CS506525

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

THE USE OF CREATIVE DRAMATICS IN THE TEACHING OF DRAMA
WITH SPECIAL APPLICATION TO THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH
AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

by

Darnyd W Ortiz Seda

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

in

ENGLISH EDUCATION

UNIVERSITY OF PUERTO RICO
MAYAGUEZ CAMPUS

1984

Approved by:

_____	_____
Member, Graduate Committee	Date
_____	_____
Member, Graduate Committee	Date
_____	_____
President, Graduate Committee	Date
_____	_____
Representative of Graduate Studies	Date
_____	_____
Chairperson of the Department	Date
_____	_____
Director of Graduate Studies	Date

ABSTRACT

Drama is usually included in every introductory literature class. All too often elements of fiction are applied to plays without considering the techniques of drama. Since performance is the main difference between drama and fiction, it should be part of the teaching of drama in order to give the students a complete view of what drama really is.

A series of theatrical techniques to teach four elements of drama--plot, character, setting, and mood--are discussed in this study. Improvisations, pantomimes, extrapolation or expanding a character, and role playing will be included among the activities. Yet, performance must not be the end of these theatrical activities in the classroom. These techniques should be incorporated with the standard methods of literary analysis and used simultaneously with them to help students comprehend plays better. The theory is illustrated with exercises used to teach two plays, William Shakespeare's The Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet, and Thornton Wilder's The Matchmaker. These plays were chosen because they present concrete characters and situations that the students can recognize as real. In addition, genre, historical period, technical devices, and audience were considered in making the choice. The study is geared to, although not restricted to, senior

high school students and/or freshman college students who are learning English as a Second Language (ESL). Special emphasis is given to the benefit ESL students may obtain from the method.

The study concludes with some guidelines for teachers who would like to use the activities discussed in their classrooms.

COMPENDIO

El drama usualmente se incluye en los cursos de introducción a la literatura. Con demasiada frecuencia, se aplican los elementos de ficción a las obras teatrales sin tomar en cosideración las técnicas dramáticas. Ya que la representación es la principal diferencia entre el drama y la ficción, ésta debe ser parte de la enseñanza del drama para poder dar a los estudiantes una visión completa de lo que el drama es en realidad.

Una serie de técnicas teatrales para enseñar cuatro elementos del drama--trama, caracterización, puesta en escena o escenario, y modo--se exponen en este proyecto. Entre estas técnicas se incluyen las improvisaciones, las pantomimas, la extrapolación o la expansión de un personaje y el desempeño de un papel. Aún así, la actuación no debe ser el fin de estas actividades teatrales en el salón de clases. Estas técnicas se deben incorporar a los métodos tradicionales de análisis literario y utilizadas simultáneamente con ellos para ayudar a los estudiantes a comprender mejor las obras teatrales. Esta teoría se ilustra con ejemplos utilizados al enseñar dos dramas, The Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet de William Shakespeare y The Matchmaker de Thornton Wilder. Estas obras fueron seleccionadas porque presentan personajes concretos y situaciones que los estudiantes pueden

reconocer como reales. En adición, el género, el período histórico, los métodos técnicos y la audiencia fueron considerados al hacer la selección. El proyecto va dirigido, aunque no está restringido, a estudiantes de último año de escuela superior y/o estudiantes de primer año de universidad que están aprendiendo inglés como segundo idioma. Se recalca especialmente el beneficio que dichos estudiantes pueden obtener de este método.

El estudio concluye con algunas directrices para los maestros a quienes les gustaría utilizar las actividades discutidas en sus salones de clases.

To my sons, Carlos Ricardo and Carlos Darío
whom I love very much.

May you have the joy of using these techniques
in school and
the pleasure of entering
the world of drama.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

When a project like this is finished, one sits down and tries to recall the different stages and moods one went through in the process of developing it. One thing that always comes to one's mind is the people who helped make the project possible. These are my people:

My parents, Darío and Nydia Ortiz, who have always stood behind me and been there when I have needed them;

My friends, Dorothy Martínez, Iris Crespo, Angel I. Martínez, and María Nazario, who always had a word of encouragement for me;

The members of my committee, Dr. Rafael Cancel and Dr. Ramón Figueroa Chapel, who have read my drafts; and

A very special person who worked many hours with me on this project, who read my drafts and who has taught me about writing and encouraged me to continue, my professor, advisor, and friend, Dr. Anthony Hunt.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
Introduction	1
Plot	16
Character	52
Setting and Mood	79
Setting	79
Mood	89
Conclusions	101
Bibliography	105

INTRODUCTION

The reading of plays is usually included as part of every introductory literature course. Moreover, when drama is analyzed in the classroom, all too often elements of fiction are applied to plays without considering dramatic techniques. Literary analysis is emphasized while performance is left out. Yet performance is the main difference between drama and fiction, and it should be part of the teaching of drama. Only then will the students have a complete view--in terms of both intellectual understanding and enactment--of what drama really is.

Moody (The Teaching of Literature, 62-78) suggests that plays should be taught through performance in the classroom. He states that "in preparing for any dramatic performance, or in studying any dramatic text, the principal aim is to consider how the action will both appear and sound under conditions of live performance" (63). There have been some attempts to use performance in the teaching of dramatic literature, most notably those derived from Oral Interpretation, Teachers in Theatre in Education, and Creative Dramatics.

Through the Oral Interpretation method, according to Bacon (Oral Interpretation), students read the piece of literature aloud and interpret the characters with

the text in hand. The problem with this method is that it usually restricts movements to facial expressions or minimal gesturing. This restriction, in the case of drama,' will prevent the students from perceiving the whole view of drama.

A new modality in England called Teachers in Theatre in Education (Day, "Resources," 10-14; Rosenberg, "The Actor/Teacher," 45-47; Rosenberg and Fennelly, "The Actor Teacher," 50-53) has also brought performance into the English classroom. In this approach, once a week a group of actors, trained both in theatre and in education, visit the classroom. Having had a previous meeting with the regular teacher, they present a performance related to the class work. This improvisation is then followed by a discussion. The problem with this approach is that the students do not get involved in the performances themselves; thus, they do not directly experience the dramatic feeling nor really learn what performance is about.

Neither of these approaches is the solution for the teaching of drama. Yet plays should not be taught strictly either from the analytical point of view or only through the use of performance. Instead it is possible to help students comprehend drama better by incorporating theatrical techniques used by actors while simultaneously using the traditional methods of literary

analysis. In this way, drama would not be divided into literature and theatre, but would be presented to the students from both aspects of drama. This incorporation would also be benefitial to students of English as a Second Language (ESL) since they would see and hear in their second language what they previously had only read. The approach that best fulfills the requirements of these ideas is called Creative Dramatics.

Creative dramatics deals with the use of theatrical techniques in the field of education. It has been defined by Ross and Roe as "...all forms of improvised drama such as dramatic play, puppet shows, and story dramatization. It is created spontaneously by the players themselves as an expression of their feelings or an interpretation of the characters in a story" ("Creative Dramatics Builds Proficiency," 383). Ehrlich defines it as "informal drama" ("Creative Dramatics as a Classroom Teaching Technique," 75) and has also pointed out that it "can be used as a teaching tool" (80). Ehrlich also quotes Winifred Ward who says that creative dramatics is "...an inclusive expression designating all forms of improvised drama: dramatic play, story dramatization, impromptu, work in pantomime, shadow and puppet play, and all extemporaneous drama" (Creative Dramatics Handbook, 17).

Most of the articles that emphasize the use of

creative dramatics for teaching drama agree that some kind of dramatic technique should be given to the students before, during, and/or after the reading of a play. Unfortunately, these articles are theoretical, not practical. They discuss what to do but not how to do it.

Martineau states that "...textual and practical work can be combined and related within a single course, thus lessening the gap between the literary and the theatrical" ("Beyond Lady Audely's Secret," 58). Manna says that "when we have begun understanding the play as a type of literature which needs to be produced and performed in order to be fully created, we are finally being true to its intended purpose" ("Drama as a Happening," 97). Tretler ("Literature and Playscript," 45-47), after stating that a play was meant for performance and that it does not come to life until it has movement, voice, sets, clothing, and lights, gives four suggestions to teach drama. These suggestions include approaching the play differently, playing the "why game," having workshop sessions instead of discussion sessions, and including more than merely reading the words of the play since costume, lighting, design, props, and music also give meaning to the play. Devine and Clark ("The Stanislavski System," 15-24) suggest that students who are analyzing a character of a play should do it in the Stanislavskian way; that is students should emphasize the intellectual

process a real actor goes through in order to develop a character.

In terms of performance, three authors suggest improvisations and short performances to enhance comprehension of plays, but they do not give any specific rules or suggestions about how to develop and use these methods in the classroom. Moffett (Teaching, 91) says that improvisation may be used as an introduction to texts to be read. The abstraction of a key situation and a further improvisation about it help the students understand what happens and how and why characters behave the way they do. This improvisation also helps involve the students with the text while they read. He further stresses that:

> Reading a play alone should occur after improvising and performing plays.... Until a student has had the experience of hearing and seeing plays and being in them, an experience that enables him to bring the script alive in his imagination, the reading of plays is not very rewarding and creates unnecessary problems of incomprehension. The failure of most play teaching is due to this lack of preparation (Teaching, 113).

Shand ("Classroom as Theatre," 13-19) mentions two academic objectives that can be achieved through the acting of scenes: a clarification of the elements of fiction in the play and the ability to teach the students to see the play on stage in their minds. Lenz ("Drama in the Classroom," 204-207) further emphasizes the importance of short performances in class to help the students become aware of the basic aspects of dramatic structure

and theatre production. According to her, these performances teach the students more about the play than a lecture would. They also help the professor to see how much students really understand about the play and to clarify any confusing areas as they arise in performance.

Most current articles on the use of creative dramatics and the teaching of drama actually concentrate on specific techniques in the teaching of Shakespeare. Shand makes a survey of different theatrical techniques used to teach Shakespeare and concludes that "...one of the best entries into the theatre of Shakespeare's imagination for our students and ourselves, is through theatre-based experiences in the classroom" ("Theatrical Techniques," 35). Some other professors have shared their experiences of incorporating theatrical techniques into their classrooms. Eaves ("The Real Thing," 463-472) divides his students into four groups in order to elaborate a scene: text critics, designers, performer-directors, and reviewers. In this way, the entire group receives not only a whole view of drama but also the historical and literary background. Hallett ("Shakespeare Workshop," 790-796) has two different groups perform the same scene. He also gives them different instructions on how to present the scene and some reviews to support each group's point of view. Rhodes ("Dramatic Approach to Hamlet," 438-441) teaches Hamlet through the impro-

visation of the play. He has his students improvise scenes from the plot before having them read the play. Based on his own experience with this technique, Rhodes feels that his students appear to comprehend the play better than previous students had. In addition to these articles on teaching Shakespeare, some teachers' guides have been published emphasizing the use of creative dramatics to teach drama. One such example is Hoetker and Engelsman's guide to drama that provides the teacher with different activities for teaching Shakespeare's Julius Caesar through creative dramatics.

In order for the students to be able to participate in improvisations like those that Rhodes and others talk about, and to do it comfortably, some related activities may be given prior to the improvisations. These would include physical warm-ups, exercises to develop sensory awareness, and techniques to induce a communal feeling among members of the group. Some articles and books have been written about activities like these which might be useful for the English classroom. Creative Dramatics Handbook, edited by Harriet W. Ehrlich and published by the Philadelphia School District, includes a sequence of games and exercises given to Philadelphia students in their creative dramatics classes. Although these exercises are geared towards the elementary grades, they can be adapted to higher grades. Schwartz ("Involving

Students," 32-38) presents a complete sequence of exercises to be used in creative dramatics classrooms from grades K-12. This sequence goes from warm-up exercises to concentration and imagination exercises to dramatic shaping. Spolin's book (Improvisation) includes theatre games for actors' workshops with exercises on character development, setting, mood, and conflict which are useful for the teaching of drama and literature in general.

In terms of empirical research, there have been experimental studies done on the use of creative dramatics and the teaching of drama. In their article "Research on Creative Dramatics," Massey and Koziol, Jr. (92-95) mention some studies done on the use of creative dramatics and cognitive development in the study of literature. Among those studies, only those by Salvo and Macaluso deal directly with drama. The subjects used for both studies were high school students who were native speakers of English. Salvo had two groups with which he discussed and analyzed Thornton Wilder's Our Town. One group spent a three-week period preparing and producing the play. The other went through the standard literary analysis of the play. The first group demonstrated better comprehension of the play in a test given three weeks after the end of the unit and in a further test three weeks later. Macaluso worked with the analysis of two plays by Edward Albee: The American Dream and The Sandbox.

He also had two groups. Both groups read the first play on their own and took a comprehension test on it. Then, one group spent a seven-day period discussing and analyzing the second play while the second group spent the same period of time in a production of the second play. Although the results showed that all the students had improved their understanding and retention of the play, they did not show a significant difference between both groups. The problem with these studies is that they deal directly with performance of the play, and not with the combined use of creative dramatics and literary analysis to enhance the students' comprehension of drama.

Apart from Rhodes' article ("Dramatic Approach," 438-441) and some teachers' guides oriented toward specific plays, the use of creative dramatics is rarely linked with the classroom teaching of drama, either for native speakers of English or students of English as a Second Language (ESL). Furthermore, no serious work has been done on the use of creative dramatics and ESL students. This thesis, therefore, will examine the use of creative dramatics in the teaching of drama to senior high school students and/or entry-level college students, with special application to ESL students.

Since performance should be part of the teaching of drama and because "too few concrete descriptions of actual procedure exist" (Massey and Koziol, Jr.,

"Research," 94), this study will provide some specific theatrical activities to teach different elements of drama. Improvisations, pantomimes, extrapolation or expanding a character, and role playing will be included among the activities. Defined as "the ability to create a very brief plot or story, implementing it with dialogue that is not planned or rehearsed" (O'Shea and Egan, "A Primer of Drama," 52), improvisations can help students "gain a deeper understanding of conflict and characterization in literature" (53). Pantomime, "acting without words, expressing feelings, thoughts through the use of the body without speech" (Ehrlich, Creative Dramatics Handbook, 17) can also be useful in the teaching of drama. Students must carefully observe people's behavior and mannerisms, and develop the ability to create a situation and characters (O'Shea and Egan, "A Primer of Drama," 52). Extrapolation or expanding a character is "the extension of what is known about a character to what one could know if he/she were a real person" (O'Shea and Egan, 53). This activity helps students see the characters as real persons and not as a product of a playwright's imagination. According to O'Shea and Egan (53), the use of extrapolation in the teaching of literature can give students a new insight into characterization and into character analysis. Role playing also helps students gain an insight into characters. "By consciously

trying to be the other person, the student gains an understanding of him and a deeper sensitivity to his feelings" (Stanford, "Why Role Playing Fails," 50). In sum, performance itself will not be the final purpose of such exercises, but rather creative dramatics will be the means through which the students will be helped to comprehend plays better. Creative dramatics will thus become a necessary part of literary analysis in order to give the students a complete view of drama.

The theatrical activities discussed in each of the following chapters will be applied to two different plays in order to demonstrate how the activities can be used in the classroom to teach drama. Several points were taken into consideration before choosing the plays. First of all, having in mind that "drama means doing," (Dixon, Growth, 43) the plays chosen present concrete characters and situations which the students can recognize as real. "Unrealistic" plays, such as those of the Theatre of the Absurd, might prove too difficult for the students to work in the realistic terms creative dramatics advocates. The second aspect considered was genre and period. Not all plays discussed in an introductory literature class are from the same period and of the same genre. In order to demonstrate that the activities can be used with plays of different genres and historical periods, a traditional sixteenth century

tragedy such as Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet was chosen. The other play, Thornton Wilder's The Matchmaker, is a modern twentieth century comedy. Also considered was the use of technical devices for the production of the play. While the first one needs almost none, the second one fully depends on such technical devices as scenery, lights, and props in order to present a believable picture to the audience. Nevertheless, creative dramatics may be used to help the students understand either play. Finally, the matter of audience was considered. The plays chosen were two that may be read profitably by ESL senior high school students and/or freshman college students in Puerto Rico where Spanish is the native language and English is taught as a second language. The plays assigned to ESL students must be both relevant (Betancourt, "From ESL," 6; Gaskill, "Teaching of Intermediate," 150; McKay, "Literature in ESOL," 532) and meaningful for such students to understand and enjoy the dramatic experience (Betancourt, 6). These two plays, for example, deal with the universal themes surrounding the topic of love and with a cultural situation--a marriage proposal--that may be compared with one that presently exists in Puerto Rico. Two other aspects must also be considered when selecting a reading assignment for ESL students: language and culture. Since the language complexity of the selection can hinder students'

understanding of the selection (Johnson, "Effects," 169), the language level must be taken into consideration before choosing any specific work. However, creative dramatics explicitly assists students by helping them to visualize a play regardless of its language complexity. Even the difficulties of dealing with Shakespearean language can be partially overcome by using creative dramatics. On the other hand, when students' vocabulary levels are low, they will depend on their cultural knowledge for the conceptual analysis of the text (Johnson, "Effects," 173). When this happens and students interpret a reading selection from the point of view of their own cultural background, they run the risk of comprehending it quite differently from "a native and probably will make what a native would classify as mistakes" (Steffenson, et. al, "A Cross-Cultural," 11). Several of the exercises contained in this study pay specific attention to the problems of cross-cultural mistakes by attempting to raise the students' awareness of cultural differences in their reading. Thus, throughout this study, whenever the techniques outlined here have special applications for ESL students in an introductory literature class, they will be emphasized.

Since the elements of drama are interrelated, each influencing the other, it is not easy to isolate one element for discussion and analysis. A play is best

experienced in its entirety. Nevertheless, classroom analysis depends upon the discussion of each individual element in order to understand its interrelationship with the others. Hopefully, the visualizing techniques of creative dramatics will restore some of the wholeness of the play's experience. Plot and character are definitely the most essential elements to understand a play, and they are therefore treated separately. However, since they influence each other, many of the exercises arbitrarily listed under either one may be used to discuss the other one. Setting and mood are put together here because of the explicit influence they have upon each other. The choice of details in a setting will show the mood the author intended for the given scene. At the same time the intended mood will influence the author and director in their choice of details for the setting. Regardless of their interrelationship, specific examples will be given for each element.

The following chapters, then, will deal with these four elements of drama--plot, character, setting, and mood--and how creative dramatics can help students understand them better. Each chapter will include a theoretical part followed by illustrations of how this theory can be applied to plays such as Romeo and Juliet and The Matchmaker. Applications for the teaching of drama to ESL students will also be noted and a general conclu-

sion about the use of creative dramatics and the teaching of the particular element will close each chapter.

PLOT

Teaching the concept of plot begins with a decision as to what it is that is meant by plot, especially the two terms commonly used to explain it: story and action. Story is the chronological presentation of all the events or situations that occur from the beginning to the end of a piece of literature. Action, on the other hand, is not only the different events presented in the work of literature but also the reasons motivating those situations. Story cannot be taken as an equivalent to plot for two reasons: events in a work of literature are not necessarily presented in a chronological order; moreover not all the events of a story may be presented in a work of literature since it is only necessary to present enough events for the work's understanding. These points lead the teachers of plot to ask themselves several questions. Is plot the events themselves or the way the events are arranged? Is it all the events of the story or only selected events of a story? Is it only the obvious actions and events that one sees or are the motivations--sometimes unspoken or otherwise hidden--also included? Manay critics have answered these questions variously in order to define plot.

Plot was defined by Aristotle in his Poetics as

an "imitation of the action...the arrangements of incidents" (Butcher, Aritotle's Theory, 25) where action "embraces not only the deeds, the situations, but also the mental processes, and the motives which underlie the outward events or which result from them" (337). Although many new definitions have been formulated since the Poetics, all of them, in one way or another, go back to Aristotle's definition. Olson, for example, defines plot as a "system of actions of a determined moral quality" where action is to be taken in terms of both external and internal aspects (Tragedy, 37). As with Aristotle, Olson gives importance to the motives behind the actions presented in a play. Albright, Halstead, and Mitchell define plot as the "scheme of action which includes selection, arrangement, and progression of events from the beginning to the end of the play (Principles, 15). They, like Aristotle, emphasize that the events seen in a plot are not all the events of the story but the arrangement of the selected ones. For Altenbernd and Lewis, plot is a "causal or motivated sequence of action which introduce[s] a conflict into the lives of a group of characters, cause[s] them to decide on certain courses of conduct in relation to the change, follow[s] the alternating efforts of the two sides to a conclusion, and give[s] a glimpse of the new state of affairs, which arises as a result of the strug-

gle" (Handbook, 16-17). This definition talks not only about the events of the story (what happens), but also about the interrelationship of selected and carefully arranged external and internal actions of the story. The arrangement of action follows a logical sequence according to the events' causes in order to arrive at a logical solution to the problems which have arisen during the events. These distinctions--story and action, events and selected events--and Altenbernd's and Lewis' approach to the concept of plot will be the basis for discussion in this chapter.

In the case of fiction, either a short story or a novel, it is somewhat easier to introduce, explain, and guide the students through the plot of the story. In a literary mode where narration is the bulk of the written work, the narration itself normally presents the readers with the necessary details to understand the tone of the story, the physical actions of the characters, and the internal actions that lead them to act as they do. Narration often describes, summarizes, and leads us to infer what has happened, what is happening, and what is to happen.

When students read plays, however, they are primarily presented with lines of dialogue and stage directions. In most cases no narrator is present to help them follow the action, describe what is going on or explain the

events. Students who are accustomed to be given everything by the narrator of a story will have trouble reading a play because, lacking the narrtor's guidance, they will find it difficult to understand and follow the sequence and relation of events. They will have to infer the significance of and the relationships among the events, both for the entire story and for each specific moment of the play. "Why," they must ask, "are these events happening in this manner?" No narrator is present to answer this question.

Creative dramatics can help the students to fill this narrative gap. The following theatrical devices --improvisations and pantomimes--may be used to develop the students' use of their imagination. Using the first device the students communicate their ideas by using both their bodies and dialogue, while the second device is based only on bodily expressions. In both cases, students are asked to create their own story, characters, situations, and conflict. They must devise motivations for each one of the story's events, and using conflict as their guide, sequence these events in such a way that may allow them to solve the conflict. The ability the students develop in sequencing events from these improvised stories and conflicts will help them to comprehend the "story" of a drama and thus fill the narrative gap they will find in plays.

When using these devices to teach drama, the teacher should guide the improvisations in a way that the situations, characters, and conflict are similar to those to be found in the play. After each improvisation, the students should be able to explain their choices of characters and situations relative to the solution of the chosen conflict. Later, after reading the play, the students will discuss the action of their improvisation and compare it with the action of the play. Pantomime utilizes the same general rules of improvisations: students develop a story with similar characteristics and situations to be found in the play, discuss it after the improvisation is finished, and compare it with the actual play after reading it. However, in this case students must use only gestures and body language to portray the characters and situations. After each pantomime, the other students can discuss the effectiveness of mime in the development of the plot.

The following exercises are those that are most relevant to the teaching of plot. Whenever a reference appears following the title of a theatrical exercise, it means that the title and the explanation of the exercise are derived from that reference. The examples, unless otherwise noted, are provided by the present author.

Improvising a Topic: The teacher gives the students a general topic such as love or death and encourages the students to develop a situation around the topic. In the

case of love, the students might devise a situation like a formal marriage proposal and develop it according to a selected conflict. Two possible conflicts which could be used to affect this situation would be the father's opposition to the wedding or the bride's refusal to get married. The students will then be expected to represent a logical sequence of events that would lead them to solve the conflict, either in a positive or negative way. If for example, the conflict chosen is the father's opposition to the wedding, students should try to convince him otherwise throughout the improvisation.

If the improvisation is being used to introduce a particular play, the topic should be related to the play which is going to be assigned. Moreover, both the topic and the play to be discussed should be made relevant to the students' lives if their interest in both the topic and the improvisation is to be aroused.

Improvising a Minimal Situation (Stewing, "More than Story," 194): Three things are specified to the students: characters, a situation, and an element of conlict. The students are to develop this minimal situation, so called because the students are given the minimal necessary things to develop a situation. As an example, the teacher may identify a father, a daughter, and a prospective fianceé (characters). The suitor comes to ask for daughter's hand (situation), and the daughter refuses to

marry him (conflict). Allow the students to improvise with the situation, especially with reasons why the daughter does not want to marry the man and with the outcome of the situation. Does the suitor manage to convince the girl? or does she still say "no" at the end of the exercise? Some of the possible reasons that the students might devise are: the daughter is simply not in love with the suitor, the daughter may be in love with another man, or the daughter may want to establish a career for herself before getting married.

Improvising a Theme-Situation (Spolin, Improvisation, 218): A theme and a setting are given to the students for them to improvise a situation. For example, the students are given a theme like "Love conquers all" and a setting like the North Pole. The students themselves will decide on the characters, their relationships, and a conflict which would lead them through a series of logical actions in order to develop the given theme. With a theme such as the one mentioned earlier, students might come up with something like a married couple living at the North Pole. He works as a pilot for an air freight company. On his way home, his airplane gets lost in a rocky, isolated part of the country. The wife, firmly believing that he is still alive, tries to hire a pilot to search for her husband and airplane. Some of the conflicts that may arise are: no available pilot for the search, no pilot

wants to fly over the isolated area where the airplane got lost, no airplane is available for this type of adventure, a snowstorm has descended over the area or everybody believes the man to be dead. Still, she is determined to find her husband.

As usual, if this technique is to be used to introduce a play, the theme given to the students should be part of the play. The setting should be similar to that of the play so that the students can relate their theme-situation improvisation to what happens in the play.

Spolin suggests that the students write out multiple themes and several settings on different pieces of paper. The papers with the themes written on them are put in one hat and the papers with the settings are put in another one. The students who take part in the improvisation then take out a piece of paper from each hat and improvise on this randomly selected combination of theme and setting. In the case of teaching a specific play, however, it might be better if the teacher were to specify both the theme and the setting to be sure that both are relevant to the work to be read.

Improvising Lines from the Play: Instead of improvising on a theme given by the teacher, students can improvise on lines taken out of context from the play to be studied. In their improvisations, students may give lines the meaning they have in the text or something

completely different from their original context. Later, after the play is read, the students can compare their interpretation of the lines with what they appear to mean in the actual context of the play. Examples of the technique will be found later on in this chapter when it is discussed in terms of specific plays.

Improvising with the Beginning of a Story (Schwartz, "Involving," 37-38): Before they read the play, students may be given the beginning of the play's story or the beginning of the sequence of events to be covered in the play. Students might then introduce different conflicts which will lead to a different development of the story and to a different ending. They might also portray the characters with different traits and points of view from those presented by the play's author. Later during the semester, after reading and discussing the play thoroughly, the students may compare and contrast how their story was developed and how it was developed by the playwright. The students should give their reasons for developing and ending the plot the way they did, and they should compare their reasons with those inferred by the events of the play. It might be interesting to compare the conflict introduced by the students with that introduced by the author, especially when dealing with ESL students whose culture differs from the author's.

Improvising with the Middle of the Story: Given

a climax to a situation, let the students improvise about the different events that may have led to the crisis and then how it may be resolved. Again, as expected, this climax should be similar to the one the students will find in the play to be read. Regardless whether students come up with complications and resolutions similar to the ones in the play or with completely different ones, they nevertheless should be able to support and explain their choices in terms of the characters and situation given to them.

Improvising with the End of the Story (Schwartz, "Involving," 38): The ending of the play may be used as the minimal situation and the students should develop a plot leading to this ending. Through this exercise, the students should be able to produce a logical sequence of events by using the resolved conflict as the guide for such a sequence. Conflict is thus very important to this exercise since it gives the students a clue as to how and why characters act in determined circumstances and situations.

This particular exercise is very useful in an ESL classroom since students would be interpreting characters and conflicts in terms of their own background and culture. Their interpretation may lead to a different view and development of the events from the one presented in the play. The comparison between both plots may help

students see some differences and/or similarities between their own culture and the playwright's. The subsequent discussion will help clarify certain points in the play's plot caused by the differences in culture and background.

Improvising Scenes from the Play (Rhodes, "Dramatic Approach," 438-441): In order to help the students understand key scenes being studied, teachers can create fictitious contemporary characters with the same characteristics as those of the characters found in the play and ask the students to improvise given situations. These situations will be the same ones encountered by the characters in the play. Each participating student will be given only a description of a single character. The other students participating in the improvisation will only know the external relationship between the characters but not know how each character really feels about the other (internal relationships). This exercise can help both the students participating and students watching the improvisation understand the real relationships among the characters and how these affect the development of the plot.

The improvisation of a scene in the actors' own words is another exercise used by theatre directors to see if the actors have understood a scene. This exercise may also be adapted for classroom use. Once the scene is read, students may be asked to close their books and

improvise the same scene they have just read. They can use the author's words if they remember them, but the purpose of the exercise is not to memorize the lines of the scene. Instead, the teacher can determine how much the students really understand what is happening in the scene and in the play in general. In a slightly different manner from other improvisations, the teacher should caution the students not to adjust the characters or the scene to their own points of view but to portray them as they are presented by the author. After the improvisation is completed, the scene may then be discussed in class in terms of its importance to the development of the plot and the characters in the play. Misinterpretations by the students due to their own culture and/or background experiences should be clarified and explained, and the students may then represent the scene again with the intended interpretation.

Improvising Scenes Missing from the Play (Shand, "A Survey," 32): Since the events presented in a plot represent only a selection from the actual story, it might be useful to the understanding of the play if some of the unselected events of the story (the unwritten scenes by the author) are identified and improvised by the students in order to clarify some uncertain points in the plot. Examples of this exercise will be given later during the chapter when the exercises are discussed in

terms of the specific plays.

* * *

Because conflict causes characters to act and events to logically follow one another, it is often regarded as the "unifying principle of action" (Preminger, Encyclopedia, 624). Preminger also states that there are "four kinds of conflict" which serve as the "basis" of plot: "man against the forces of nature, man against his fellow-man, man against himself, man against some conceptualized or personalized aspect of the order of things, such as Fate or Destiny or Nemesis" (624). Given these four types of conflict, students in a typical literature class may identify the conflict present in the play. However, identifying and understanding are not necessarily the same thing. Through selected techniques, especially those involving pantomime or silent action, creative dramatics helps the students to reach beyond mere identification for a fuller understanding of a play's conflict.

Trapped (Spolin, 78): Students must choose a place from which to escape. Of course, the teacher may provide the setting and reasons why the students are trapped. For example, during a flood a person who lives alone on a second floor must save his grandmother who lives in another flooded part of the city. However, since it has been raining for quite a while, he cannot get out of his own house (man against nature). Another example would

be a man whose girlfriend has given him a set hour to meet her at a cafeteria. If he is not there by seven o'clock, she will leave the country forever. As he goes to meet her, he becomes trapped in the elevator in the building where he works. It is already six-thirty and he needs at least fifteen minutes to get to their meeting place (man against nemesis).

Silent Tension (Spolin, "Silent Tension #1," 188): Place, characters. and situation are given to the players, but not to those students who serve as an audience. The tension is so great that people cannot talk, so no dialogue is used in the scene. Yet, through their silent actions, the players must communicate their place, characters, and situation to the audience. The following situation illustrates the exercise. A man has just died and his widow and grown children are at his funeral when the man's lover arrives. There are so many people at the funeral that the dead man's family--unwilling to cause a disturbance--remains in silence unable to get the other woman out of the funeral home without making a scandal (man against himself).

Hidden Conflict (Spolin, 250-251): Students agree on place, characters, and situation. Each character will then choose a conflict but will not let the other characters know it and the conflict is thus never verbalized. As soon as it is revealed, the scene is over. The

audience, nevertheless, should know the conflicts. Spolin's example involves a husband and wife in the kitchen for breakfast. The husband does not want to go to work, but the wife wants him to leave since she is expecting someone (man against man).

Not all the above mentioned techniques of creative dramatics have to be used when discussing the plot and conflict of a play. Teachers should decide which are best suited to their needs. The plot itself will often determine which exercises to use.

* * *

William Shakespeare's well-known play The Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet presents a failure to reconcile hate through love. The plot is well known. Romeo and Juliet, son and daughter respectively of two enemies, fall in love and are secretly married by Friar Lawrence. Their new-found love eventually leads them through a series of actions that cause their own deaths. Using the conflict and plot development of this play, we may now review some of the foregoing techniques of creative dramatics and point out how they may be applied in this specific instance of a traditional play often encountered in ESL classes.

Improvising a Minimal Situation: Situations similar to the ones found in Shakespeare's play can be given to the students to improvise. One such example of a

minimal situation might involve a girl and a boy (characters) who are in love and want to get married (situation). Unfortunately, the girl's parents do not want her to marry her boyfriend since they already have a better suitor for her (conflict). The situation to be improvised will be similar to the scene where Juliet, already married to Romeo, is told by her father that she is to marry Paris that same week. The student playing the girl might decide to ask for advice, as Juliet did, from a close relative or a priest or minister. Suggested advice given to her may vary from secretly marrying her beloved, following her father's orders, waiting for some time to see if she really loves her boyfriend or simply eloping. The player might then debate whether or not to follow the advice given to her or to reach her own decision.

This improvisation should be kept in the students' minds while they read the real situation in the play so that they can compare and contrast the student's decision with Juliet's. The student's final decision and reasons for such a decision might differ from Juliet's due to the player's background and attitude toward love. The teacher must remember that the student is going to be acting and thinking as if she were really going through the situation. She is not, at this time, acting as the character of Juliet. Something that definitely will

influence the student's manner of deciding how to solve the conflict will be the era in which she is living. Juliet "lived" in the sixteenth century when the ideas of marriage and love were very different from those of the twentieth century. Young people were not then as free to love and marry whomever they wanted.

Improvising a Theme-Situation: One of the themes arising from a reading of Romeo and Juliet is that love is painful. This theme and a setting such as a public square may be given to develop. They might come up with a situation such as a girl and a boy who are supposedly in love with each other and who plan to meet one evening at the town square. The girl does not arrive on time and while the boy is waiting for her, the boy's other girlfriend arrives and kisses him. While the couple is kissing, the first girl arrives and sees them. She demands an explanation and is shocked when the second girl tells her that the boy is her fiancee and that they are getting married the following week. After reading Romeo and Juliet and discussing how the theme is treated in the play, students might compare their view of the painfulness of love with the view presented in Shakespeare.

Improvising Lines from the Play: "You kiss by th' book" is a simple line from the play to give to the students for an improvisation. What may vary between

the students' improvisation and the play, is the situation in which the phrase is used. In the play the phrase is said by Juliet to Romeo during a party after their first kiss. Students might also use a party and a first kiss as the situation, but they might also devise a situation like a wife in a hospital for an extremely delicate operation. After the operation, the husband stays with her until she wakes up from the anesthesia. Happy to see her alive and well, he kisses her and vice versa. To relieve both their tension and make her feel at ease, he says "you kiss by the book " and embraces her. The discussion which should follow will compare both situations and it should center on the contextual meaning of the line both in the improvised scene and in Shakespeare's play. It should also focus on how the contextual meaning of the line in the improvisation resembles the one intended by the author.

Improvising with the Beginning of the Story: Before reading Romeo and Juliet, the teacher may give the students the opening situation of the play for them to improvise. A young man is in love with a girl who does not love him. He finds out that the girl will be attending a costume party at a house whose owner is his father's enemy. Nevertheless the young man decides to attend the party where he meets his father's enemy's daughter. They immediately fall in love. This situation

might elicit different responses from the students. On the one hand, they might decide that the love between the youngsters is not worth the trouble it may cause them. On the other hand, as it happened in the play, they might decide that their love is worth any trouble. If this is the case, the development of the plot will center on the different possibilities and ways of making their love triumph over every obstacle. In this case, the students might decide to end the story with the wedding, changing the tragedy of the play into a love story where the enemies will end their differences and join in celebrating the wedding. This development of events can later be compared to the actual development given by Shakespeare. Differences in approach may be due to the students' own attitudes about love, their culture, or their personal background.

Improvising With the Middle of the Story: Instead of giving the students the opening situation a teacher may decide that working with the middle of the story may help the students understand the play better. In the case of Romeo and Juliet, the following situation can be given to the students, asking them to provide the events leading to it. A young couple has just secretly married. The girl returns home to wait for her husband who will pick her up that night and take her with him. On his way home, the boy meets his bride's

cousin, they have a fight, and the cousin is killed. News gets to the bride and she is confronted with a difficult decision. Does she still love her husband or does she now hate him for killing her cousin? Students must come up with convincing reasons for the couple's secret marriage and for the fight that takes the cousin's life. One of the possible ideas that the students might develop is that the couple had to marry secretly because the girl's parents did not approve of the young man as their daughter's boyfriend. The parents had prohibited her from seeing him and had told every member of their family about their decision. On the wedding day, a friend of the family happened to see the youngsters entering church together and told the cousin. The cousin then decided to confront the young man and fight with him if necessary in order to keep him away from the girl. They meet in a public place and while the boy remains calm the cousin becomes enraged and begins to fight. The cousin, swinging wildly, falls to the floor, hits his head against a rock, and dies.

Improvising with the End of the Story: Another option that teachers have to help students understand plot is to give them the end of the story and ask them to come up with logical events leading to this solution. In the case of Romeo and Juliet, the teacher can present the students with a situation in which a young

couple is found dead by the police and the couple's parents. Although no apparent reason exists for their deaths, a priest, found near the scene, confesses that he had secretly married them and that they were planning to move to another town in order to live together as man and wife. Students must come up with reasons why the couple had to kill themselves and why they were secretly married. As in the previous exercise, the reason for the marriage may be the girl's parents' opposition to the relationship or the parents' lack of knowledge of such a relationship. In the latter case, a reason must then be given for this lack of knowledge. Fear that the parents might not accept the relationship due to the youngsters' age or the boy's social status, and differences between both families are some of the reasons that may be given for parental lack of knowledge. As to reasons for the double death, students may decide that it was impossible for the couple to live together or that death was the only way for them both to stay together and to teach their parents a lesson on love and friendship.

Improvising Scenes from the Play: Before the class reads Romeo and Juliet, the teacher can create characters such as those below and ask the students to develop a given situation which would parallel a scene from the play. Each participating student will receive only the

information related to his/her own character.

Ron: nineteen years old, unemployed, son of the owner of Mount's supermarket chain, in love with Julie--daughter of the owner of Cain's supermarket chain--kills Tom is a fight in the public square

Julie: seventeen years old, daughter of Cain, in love with Ron.

Matt: friend to Ron, talks a lot

Ben: friend to Ron, even tempered

Tom: Julie's cousin, hates Mount and his family, hot tempered, challenges Ron and gets killed in the fight that takes place between them

Father Larry: Ron's friend and spiritual married Julie and Ron in secret wishing to finish the feud between their families

Nara: raised Julie, loves Julie as her own daughter, advises Julie when she has any problems

Each of the student-characters should know that there has been a feud between Mount and Cain for years, a feud that has involved hatred not only between the heads of the families but also between the members of both families. They should also know that due to the constant battles between both sides, the town judge has declared that a quick trial will be held, at any time of the day or night, and that if anybody is found guilty of killing anybody else due to the feud, the guilty person will be condemned to die.

Given the above information, students are asked to represent the following situations. Uninvited, Ron attends a Halloween costume party at Cain's house

where he falls in love with Julie. Tom recognizes him and decides to avenge Ron's bold "visit." Shortly after the party, Ron and Julie are secretly married by Father Larry. Julie returns home to wait for Ron who will pick her up that night. On his way home Ron, accompanied by Ben and Matt, meets Tom who challenges Ron to fight. Let the students improvise what may happen in such a situation according to the characters' traits. In the next two scenes, the lovers go to their respective confidants--Father Larry and Nara--to see what the next step in their relationship will be. Following the advice given to them and their own feelings, they meet for their wedding night.

The presentation of these scenes can help the students both experience and understand, while reading the play, how the characters felt in such situations and how events can influence a person's decision in some circumstances.

Improvising Missing Scenes from the Play: The improvisation of scenes not presented in Shakespeare's play can help the students better understand his selected scenes. One such scene of Romeo and Juliet might involve the reason/s for the feud between the families. The students must come up with such a strong reason that the feud can last for years without any hopes of solving the feud. Perhaps both men were in love with the same woman when

the three were young. The woman's father preferred Montague over Capulet. This decision caused friction between both men, a friction that grew over the years, influenced and instigated by the people who surrounded both men. As an interesting sidelight, students might discuss why Shakespeare chose not to represent these actions and motivations on stage.

Trapped: Let the students improvise Friar John's attempt to escape from the guards at Mantua in order to inform Romeo about Friar Lawrence's plan. Friar John's various attempts might include, from the students' point of view, telling the guards he is one of the Pope's assistants on a secret mission, trying to jump the wall surrounding Mantua, and even trying to bribe the guards.

Silent Tension: This exercise may be used to explain the dance scene (place) where Romeo and Juliet (characters) meet (situation). Another character involved in the scene would be Tybalt who discovers Romeo, the enemy, at his aunt's house. By giving the students enough background about the three characters, they may be able to improvise the scene without words. Romeo's and Juliet's meeting and falling in love, Tybalt's discovery and anger toward Romeo, must be presented without using words. Tybalt may leave the party angry at Romeo or he may take Juliet away from Romeo's arms. Either way, both the student actors and the student audience will have

a chance to see and feel the tension caused by the meeting of these three characters due to the existing conflict in the play.

* * *

In the following section, the same techniques as above will be applied to another play. This time a modern comedy is used in order to demonstrate how these techniques can be used in the teaching of both a tragedy and a comedy. The application to both plays thus demonstrates that creative dramatics can help students understand plays from different historical periods and genres.

Thornton Wilder's The Matchmaker presents us with the personality restructuring of a stingy, practical man like Horace Vandergelder by the clever and ambitious Dolly Levi who has decided she wants him for herself. Through a series of actions, ranging from disguises, accidents, and mistaken identities, Vandergelder is humanized by the characters around him.

Improvising a Minimal Situation: A good scene for this exercise would be the one where Barnaby and Cornelius are at Irene's hat shop and Horace comes in to visit Irene. The characters given to the students include two workers, a drugstore clerk, and the workers' boss. The two workers happen to be in the drugstore when their boss happens to go in to ask for the lady's hand (situation). The conflict arises in that their boss is

extremely jealous and they do not know how he will react if he sees them with his fianceé. In addition, the two workers are supposed to be working; consequently they fear losing their jobs if their boss finds them at the store during working hours. The students would have to devise different ways to get both men out of the drugstore without being seen by the boss. They can disguise themselves, try to leave the place as unobstrusively as possible, or just hide in the store (as in fact, happens in the play). The students would also have to come up with a reason to have both men in the drugstore in the first place. Some possibilities might include a sudden disease, a coffee break, or perhaps just a visit to the store's clerk. Whatever the reasons chosen by the students, the exercise will help them understand the dilemma that Barnaby, Cornelius, and Irene experience in a similar situation in the play.

Improvising a Theme-Situation: "Love is foolish" is a simple statement of one of the themes presented in The Matchmaker. This theme and a setting, such as a cabin, may be developed by the students. The result might be a situation such as a married couple that returns to their honeymoon cabin to celebrate their first wedding anniversary. They are very much in love. After a few minutes, it starts to rain heavily and the wife discovers that she has left her purse in the car. Since she needs

it immediately, she asks her husband, who is suffering from a terrible cold, to go outside and get it for her. Although there is no available umbrella, he does what she asks of him. After reading The Matchmaker and discussing how Wilder views foolishness in love, students might compare their view of foolishness in love with the view presented in the play.

Improvising Lines from the Play: Vandergelder's line "Marriage is a bribe to make a housekeeper think she's a householder" may be chosen for an improvisation. The students might decide to use a situation similar to the one in the play where a lonely, middle-aged man is looking for somebody to take care of his house. On the other hand, they may arrive at a more complex situation in which a husband convinces his wife that she is indeed the "master" of the house, while in actuality she will do anything that her husband wants without stopping to ask for the reasons. The discussion which might follow the comparison of both situations should center on the contextual meaning of the line both for the improvised scene and the play. It should also focus on how the contextual meaning of the line in the improvisation resembles Wilder's intentions. Obviously, a good topic for discussion would compare the feelings and experiences of contemporary women with regard to the line. Does the line agree with women's liberation movement or not? How

would Horace Vandergelder feel about women's liberation? Can Dolly Levi and Irene Molloy be considered liberated women or not? The answers to these questions may help the students see what the women's world at the turn of the century was like in comparison with the students' own world.

For ESL students, it is especially appropriate to compare their present view of women's position in life with the view of women presented by an author from a different culture. They must take into consideration, though, that the play takes place at the turn of the century and that in their own country the position of women may have changed from the 1880's to the present year. Another point that must be taken into consideration is that although the play is set in the 1880's, it was written in 1938. Thus Wilder's presentation of woman at the turn of the century may be paralleled by the position of women in 1938. How much is Dolly Levi a woman of the 1880's and how much is she a woman of the 1930's? How much is Dolly Levi a woman of the 1980's? How much is the woman in the students' culture like Dolly Levi? Through answering these questions, students will be allowed to see the play from a different perspective and to understand it more fully.

Improvising Scenes from the Play: Before they read the play, the students may be given a set of characters

and be asked to develop a given situation which would parallel a scene from the play. Each participating student will receive only the information related to his/her own character.

Harold: sixty years old, owner of a food store in a little town, stingy, rich, hot tempered practical, vain

Dolly: fifty years old, friend of Harold's late wife, elegant, shrewd, clever, generous, ambitious, scheming, wants to marry Harold in order to get his money and not be lonely

One of the situations from the play which the students could develop is the following. Harold has asked Dolly, his late wife's friend, to find him a suitable bride. Dolly agrees to help him, but she really wants Harold for herself. The students should develop a scene where Harold tells Dolly he has taken the decision to marry Irene, a boutique owner. The students' Dolly might respond as the real Dolly did in the play, asking Harold to wait because she has another girl better than Irene. On the other hand, the students might decide to portray Dolly more agressively and have her tell Harold her true intentions. If Harold says no, the rest of the improvisation will deal with ways Dolly attempts to convince him. If he says yes, the scene is over. After the actual scene is read, the students will compare it with their improvisation. The discussion should focus on the decisions made by the characters in the situation and how these decisions were influenced by their respective

traits. If the improvisation was developed differently from the play, the students might argue as to how and to what degree the plot of the play would have been affected if their view of the scene had been the one used by the author.

Improvising Missing Scenes from the Play: One of the missing scenes from the play which may be interesting to improvise would be a previous meeting between Horace and Irene. After giving the students the characters' descriptions and their reasons for getting married (Horace wants a housekeeper and Irene does not want to work anymore), they may come up with a scene in which a nervous Horace visits an equally nervous Irene at her hat shop. Horace, not accustomed to dealing with women, may not know what to say and will spend most of the time either asking Irene about her business or talking about his. Irene, on the other hand, may have been expecting a romantic and personal chat. Disillusioned, she may dryly respond to Horace or she may even try to change the topic of the conversation. When Horace finally leaves, Irene may decide that if Horace returns she will be as feminine and beautiful as possible in order to force him to propose to her.

Trapped: The students may improvise the scene where Horace tries to leave the restaurant without paying. Some of his excuses may be that he has lost his wallet (which

is true), that he can sign a blank check (not accepted by the restaurant's manager), or that he will call his bank manager to speak on his behalf. Dolly, who has the wallet, will let Horace go through all the situations before she offers to pay the bill.

* * *

There are two important factors that an ESL teacher should consider in an introductory literature class: culture and language (Povey, "The Teaching of Literature," 162-186; Marckwardt, The Place of Literature, 42-60; Johnson, "Effects on Reading," 169-181; McKay, "Literature," 529-536). These two aspects strongly influece the ESL students' comprehension of a story and may lead to certain difficulties when teaching plot.

Teachers must be aware of existing differences between the students' culture and the author's culture in order to be able to effectively teach plot. Problems may arise when the text presents the students with actions, objects, and points of view with a different set of values in their culture as compared with the English-speaking culture (Marckwardt, The Place of Literature, 46). Another problem which may occur is the lack of a cultural equivalent in the students' culture of what is being portrayed (Marckwardt, 46). One suggestion to ease the problem is the observation of people in situations where they act and react according to their culture

(Marckwardt, 49). Creative dramatics can provide this presentation of culture.

Through the use of improvisations of similar situations to be found in the plot, students become familiar with situations not entirely known to them. They may also see how the same elements and situations might differ in different cultures. For example, in many present-day cultures, it is unusual for parents to arrange their daughter's wedding. Yet, such is the case in Romeo and Juliet. By presenting the students with this situation and making them react to it as people would within the play's culture, the teacher is helping them both to experience and to understand why Juliet reacted the way she did. Students may then understand why she had to obey and could not just leave the house to get married as a contemporary Juliet would do. In the case of a lack of cultural equivalents, creative dramatics may be used as a tool for introducing the element to the students and for correctly interpreting it within the author's culture.

Language, obviously, is also very important in understanding the plot of any work. ESL teachers should be aware of the level of language that their students have as compared to the level of language used in the text. In addition, teachers should decide if the intelligibility of the text can be supplied by the

context (Povey, "Teaching of Literature," 178). A presentation of the events may be necessary for the students to understand the language of those events. If there is any doubt about possible misunderstandings because of the language used, ESL teachers can recur to creative dramatics.

The use of theatrical techniques allows the students to improvise on the same situations presented in the plot while using their own language level. The participation in improvisation, either as "actors" or as "audience," lets the students both see and hear what is happening. The words are complemented by the action and are used in context. These three factors--students' participation in improvisation, words complemented by action, and language in context--can help the students visualize the action and follow situations better when they read the play. The situation chosen by the teacher should be one that is familiar and relevant both to the students and to the text of the play. For example, one of the problems an ESL teacher might have while teaching Shakespeare is precisely that of language. Many of his plays are in verse and in an English quite different from the one now spoken by our students. In order to help them understand what they are going to read, they may improvise on some of the main situations using their own language level. In Romeo and Juliet, the audience

never knows the reason behind the families' feud. Earlier in this chapter a love disagreement between two young men was suggested as a way to improvise a scene explaining the reason for the feud. Other improvisations, perhaps more relevant to the students' own culture, may be used. In the specific case of Puerto Rico, the improvisation might have two leaders of opposing political parties whose respective daughter and son fall in love. Caution, though, must be taken to avoid having the exercise become a political meeting. Both teacher and students should have in mind that the primary purpose for doing the improvisation is the understanding of the language and plot of the play.

All of the techniques mentioned in this chapter can be used in any ESL classroom. However, in using them, ESL teachers may encounter student resistance to participation in the activities. Two reasons may account for this resistance: novelty of the method and lack of comfort about speaking English in front of an audience that may make fun of them both for their language and acting abilities. This sense of discomfort arises from the fact that in many ESL classrooms, especially in Puerto Rico, emphasis is given to the correct usage of the language and not to the communication and development of ideas in the target language.

Although the problems of novelty and making fun

of classmates can be solved only by time and repeated use of the method, creative dramatics does provide a means for helping students ease over the discomfort of speaking in the target language. Pantomime especially can help the students become accustomed to the new method. Through the use of pantomimes, students are able to fully participate without being self-conscious about the language they are using or about the errors they may commit while speaking. Although performance and speech are not the final purpose of the improvisations in an introductory literature class, students still feel that if they are in an English classroom, they are going to be evaluated by the way they express themselves.

The ESL teacher should always have in mind that the purpose of the techniques of creative dramatics discussed above is not performance or to get the students to speak English perfectly. The purpose is to help them "see" and follow a plot. When the students understand this purpose and that they are not going to be "punished" for committing an error in the target language, they will freely and spontaneously participate in the activities. Ultimately, for them, these activities become not only fun, but, more importantly, a learning experience.

* * *

With the use of the foregoing techniques students will come to a better understanding of what a plot is.

As the students represent a story of their own invention, they will be forced to choose from that story only the events necessary to transmit the idea/s they had when they created the story. The students will thus understand that the events presented in a play are not all the happenings of the story. Once the students choose the events they will represent, they have to perform them in such a way that their audience can understand the story behind the representation without the need of a narrator. Every action must have a cause and the students are responsible for giving every action a logical reason--either external or internal--which can lead them to solve the story's conflict. Students will learn to look beyond the given scenes, to think about the "missing" scenes, and to comprehend the real external and internal reasons behind the presented scenes. Ultimately, they will understand the author's reasons for ordering the scenes as they are. Creative dramatics will have helped the students to visualize all the events of a dramatic story and thus to fill the narrative gap mentioned at the beginning of the chapter.

CHARACTER

Once the students have understood the order and relation of the events that constitute the plot, the most important thing that follows is to understand the characters, the relationships among themselves and within the plot, and how these relationships affect the development of the plot. Normally, characters are representations of "real" persons who enact the events of a "real" story. Thus, for them to be believable, they must have four characteristics (Butcher, Aristotle's Theory, 83-84; Olson, Tragedy, 82): usefulness, propriety, truthfulness to life, and consistency. In other words, characters, no matter how minor their importance is to the development of the plot, must be useful to it; they must serve a necessary function in the play. They must be appropriate to what they have to do in the play and be recognizable as people known to the audience. In this way, readers and viewers may develop certain opinions and feelings about the characters and they may begin to know what to expect from them. Above all, characters must be consistent in their actions and thoughts. This characteristic--consistency--is the one that distinguishes characters from real life. As a playwright strives to give his characters reality, he often makes them less believable as human beings because in real life people

are rarely as consistent as they are in art. Human nature, often inconsistent and unexplainable in itself, is at variance with artistic characterization, often too consistent and too explainable to be perfectly human. Such is the difference between art and life, between real life and the representation of life. Moreover, such is the benefit of the artistic mirror that authors hold up to nature; we are allowed to see the patterns of our lives in a clearer fashion.

Unlike narrative literature, drama usually does not describe the characters for its audience. Knowledge of a character in drama must come to the students by what the characters say and do, and what is said about them and to them (Weales, A Play, 38; Albright, Principles, 15). In addition, there are two other aspects of a character that help students to know them: tone and costuming. The tone--how the words are spoken and perceived--which the character uses often conveys a personality more than what is said. True meaning can be established only after tone is taken into account. Costuming is also important for an audience of readers to create a mental picture of the character. Opinions about personality are commonly associated with the way one dresses.

Lacking a detailed description of a character (as found in short stories), readers of drama have to use their imaginations and the little information given to

them in stage directions in order to picture the characters in plays. However, some theatrical games and exercises will help the students to create these imaginative pictures and will assist them in better understanding of the nature of a character. The following are some useful exercises that the teacher may turn to according to the particular needs and situation in the classroom. Not all the games have to be used for every play, only those that the teacher may think pertinent to the specific play under discussion.

Preoccupation (Spolin, "Preoccupation A," 133-135): Two actors are in the same place. Each one has his own train of thought, but only one speaks while the other is silent. The second one is supposedly listening to the first. For example, two friends are eating at a cafeteria. One is having trouble with his wife who wants to divorce him. The other, who is listening, has his own problems. His wife, whom he loves very much, is dying of cancer. The second one is courteously listening to what his friend is saying, but not really paying much attention. This type of exercise may help the students understand, without the use of exposition, the characters' feelings, thoughts, actions, and background.

Contrapuntal Argument (Spolin, "Contrapuntal Argument A," 180): Two players begin an argument involving both of them. Each develops his or her own theme and

talks simultaneously without a pause. The object of each player is to prevent the other from interrupting his or her speech. An example of this exercise is the situation in which a baseball team's manager and an umpire argue about the latter's decision. Both speak at the same time, carrying on with their own trains of thought without stopping or letting the other interrupt them. This game helps the students--both actors and audience--to attempt to follow and concentrate on the thoughts of a particular character.

Physical Irritation (Spolin, "Physical Irritation B," 267-268): Players enact a situation in which one of the persons is under close scrutiny by the other and must cover up an embarrassing blemish. The object of the game is for the second player to be able to conceal the problem during an interview. As for example, a graduating student who desperately needs a job and wants to make a good impression on the interviewer, goes to a job interview. The job is with ACE Spot Remover Company. Seconds before going into the room, he notices a dark spot on his tie. He spends the whole interview trying to hide the spot.

Character Agility A (Spolin, 279-280): After reading a play but before discussing it, the teacher gives the students the following categories which they write down on a piece of paper: animal, rhythm, props, costume

pieces, and color. Teachers may add other categories to the list or change them if they are not appropriate for their students. Next, a list of characters from the play is read out, one at a time. The students write down whatever comes to their minds about each character for each category. A time limit should be given for each category. An example given by Spolin in her book is the following:

Character: Professor

1. Animal: Owl
2. Image: Rock
3. Rhythm: Staccato
4. Prop: Pointer
5. Costume Piece: Muffler, Overshoe
6. Color: Purple

This game gives students a clear image of the character they are dealing with in a play. They can visualize the character better and relate it to relevant characteristics from their own background. The game is also useful in terms of seeing if students really understand characters. Through the discussion of the students' answers, it is possible to see how much they have uncovered about each character's personality. The game should be used after the students have read the play, but before they discuss it. After discussing the play, the game may be played again, and the characteristics given by the

students the first time may then be compared to the characteristics given on the second occasion. Not only will this reveal how well the students really understand the play, but it may also give the teacher clues to follow in the discussion of the students' awareness of characterization.

A possible variation of this game is to give the students the characteristics for each category in order to see if they can identify the intended character (Spolin, "Character Agility D," 271). This helps the students both to identify and differentiate among the characters of the play.

Character Agility B (Spolin, 270): Instead of using a variation of categories as in the previous game, the teacher announces one specific category. The students then write as much about the character as they can in this specific category within a one minute limit. For example, with the category of "image," students might come up with things such as "rock," "wood," "stone," "cement," and "iron." ESL students might be given a longer time limit according to the students' level of understanding.

Word Tone: One of the ways in which readers and audience get to know a character in a play is by what they say, but what is more important is to know how the characters say what they say. In order to perceive the

differences, the students may be given a simple word like "no" and ask them to say it with different tones such as: happiness,anger, surprise, irony, fear, love, or hate. The teacher may go farther by giving the students a sentence or even a short poem which they can recite. No matter what the teacher finally decides to give the students--word, sentence or poem--the important thing is that they repeat it with different attitudes. By doing this, students will be able to see how the same words can mean different things depending on how the words are said.

You Figure It Out (Donlan, 76): Students stop reading the play and must improvise the rest of the story. This exercise is for the understanding and development of both plot and character. In teaching plot, the teacher may ask the students to stop reading at the end of an act and to improvise the rest of the story. After discussing the improvisation and their reasons for ending the act as they did, as well as why their characters acted as they did, the students then continue to read the rest of the play. When the end of the play with the final development of the characters takes place, a comparison between the students' improvisation and the actual play should follow. The discussion should focus on the reasons the story ends as it does, especially since the students have the same information as the play contains up to the point of improvisation.

Extrapolation/Expanding a Character (O'Shea and Egan, 53): A way of assessing the understanding of characters is by thinking of them in terms of real people. The following two exercises do precisely that: help students understand characters by asking them to "give life" to the characters. The first one--"What If " Statements--asks questions about the play that the students have to answer from the characters' point of view. The second one--"If I Were" Statements--asks the students to put themselves in the characters' position and to solve some of the characters' conflicts from their own, i.e. the students', point of view.

"What If" Statements: Students should be asked questions which will put them in the place of the different characters of the play. By forcing the students to think as the characters would, a better insight into the characters' personalities arises. One of the examples given by O'Shea and Egan is to ask students "What if Romeo and Juliet did not have the support and sympathy of Friar Lawrence? In answering, the students are forced to search for other possible solutions to the characters' dilemma. However, they must do so in terms of the characters themselves, and of what would be appropriate for the characters of the play.

"If I Were" Statements: Ask the students to put themselves in the place of the characters. What would

they do if faced with the same situations? These statements give students the experience of extending their personal reactions to fictitious situations. According to the authors, this type of exercise provides the students with a new insight into characterization and character analysis, encourages themto use their personal insight in responding to life situations, and assists them in identifying with feelings that are not necessarily their own.

Role Playing (O'Shea and Egan, 53-54): Role playing is another way of giving life to characters. In this exercise, students do not only think as the characters do, but also act as if they were the characters of the play. There are two ways in which the students can work the exercise. They may act out different scenes from the play, as the scenes are written, or they may follow O'Shea's and Egan's suggestion. According to them, after reading a specific scene, the selected students should jot down their ideas about a character to be used for role playing. Some words and actions will change to conform to the students' own view point, and some discussion must focus on how the character has been changed. After the students act out the scene with the changes, further discussion will revolve around how the changes affect both the other students' perception of the character and the overall development of the play. This type

of exercise helps the students to understand the characters' feelings and actions, and to realize how circumstances can affect a character's reaction.

* * *

Consistency is one of the main characteristics characters should have. However, if we take a look at the main characters of Romeo and Juliet, we will find out that some of the main characters are not consistent. Juliet, for example, starts the play as a girl who does not think of love or marriage, but two scenes later she falls in love. Romeo, on the other hand, is in love with Rosaline and before the act ends, he is in love with Juliet. But the best example of inconsistency is the Nurse. Although loyal to Juliet and the Capulets, she does what is convenient for her and advises Juliet to do the same. This lack of consistency is what pushes the Nurse to agree to Juliet's marriage to Romeo and then, knowing that she is already married, advising Juliet to marry Paris. These and other difficulties of characterization in the play may be better explained through the use of the following techniques.

Preoccupation: When the Nurse returns home from seeing Romeo, she keeps on talking about how tired she feels; meanwhile Juliet is terribly worried about her husband. A similar situation may be given to the students to develop. For example, a wife whose husband is believed

to be dead in an airplace accident goes to the site of the crash with a friend. The friend has three kids whom she has left with an old neighbor. The friend, anxious about what the neighbor is going to tell her when she gets back home, talks on and on about her worries while the unfortunate wife listens. The wife wants to be polite but she is trying to think about her lost husband. Improvising this scene may help the students to understand what Juliet was feeling when the Nurse kept on talking about how tired she was without caring about Juliet's problem or the real reason she went out to meet Romeo.

Contrapuntal Argument: Lord Capulet tells Juliet that she will marry Paris and, although Juliet argues with him, finally she must subdue her feelings and agree to Lord Capulet's decision. In present-day society, it is not common for a father to arrange his daughter's wedding or for the daughter to obey her father blindly. So the students mayimprovise a more relevant scene. A girl has a boyfriend and wants to marry him. When the father objects, she tells him they are planning to get married anyway. An argument starts. The father gives reasons why she should not marry him as the girl gives her reasons why she must. Perhaps the father will accept the daughter's argument and let her marry the boy or maybe the girl may decide to wait awhile to see if the father's arguments are correct. Either way, contrapuntal argument

will give the students a contemporary version of the scene where the bride is allowed to argue with her father without being disinherited by him.

Physical Irritation: This particular exercise is useful to help the students understand how Juliet and Friar Lawrence feel when she finds Paris in Friar Lawrence's cell talking about their future marriage. The students may improvise on a situation where feelings of despair and guilt can be felt on one side and hopefulness and happiness on the other side. A possible situation would involve a mother whose son has cancer. The son is operated on to remove the cancer. After the operation she goes to see the doctor firmly convinced that the operation was the end of the cancer. Unfortunately, this is not true and the doctor tries to hide the truth from her.

Character Agility A: With the following categories for Nurse announced by the teacher, students may come up with the following examples in a thirty second time period:

Character: Nurse

1. Animal: Hen
2. Image: Boat
3. Rhythm: Staccato
4. Prop: Fan
5. Costume Piece: Veil

6. Color: Red

Discussing these responses will help students to visualize the character of the Nurse better and to analyze her in terms of her actions in the play. In the example, students can argue that the Nurse takes care of Juliet as a hen would do with her chickens. She is like a sail boat which moves in any direction according to how the wind blows and is always in nervous movement (staccato). The Nurse can be visualized as wearing a veil and using a fan to cover her face whenever she needs to conceal her guilt for changing her attitude about something. Being always on the move, she would wear a lively, vibrant color such as red. This exercise, thus, sets the character's picture in the students' mind.

Another way of creating the picture of the character in the students' mind and of helping them identify and differentiate characters in the story, is to give them the characteristics for each category and let them identify the character. An example of this variation can be the following:

1. Animal: Lion
2. Image: Fire
3. Rhythm: Accelerato
4. Prop: Sword
5. Costume Piece: Cape
6. Color: Hot Red

Character: [Mercutio]

The characteristics given by the teacher should be as specific as possible for the character in order to help the students get a very clear and definite image of the character being discussed. In this case, the teacher can argue tht Mercutio is as fierce as a lion, hot tempered as fire, and eager and willing to act at every moment (accelerato). Having the above charcteristics, Mercutio can be expected to be involved in a lot of fights, so he would need a sword. Capes, usually associated with gentlemen and duels, would be the perfect costume piece for him. As for color, hot red is the ideal since the color is bright, intense, and bloody.

Character Agility B: Given the category of color and character of Juliet, the students may associate her with light blue, pink, orange, white, and beige. These colors may depict a beautiful, young woman; of course, it is the discussion of the colors that is important. On their explanation of choices, students may even identify specific points in the story where Juliet is pink (party), light blue (balcony scene), white (wedding night), orange (visit to Friar Lawrence's cell), and beige (final scene).

Word Tone: Sometimes it is hard for the students to accept the apparent changes of Juliet's personality from the innocent young girl who dances with Romeo at the

party, to the decided woman who marries Romeo in defiance of her father, and who finally kills herself. Students might be helped to see the changes by asking them to say the line from the play "You kiss by th' book" in different tones. The range of tones may include: innocently, in love, affirmatively, angrily, defiantly, resigned, with doubt, and finally with conviction. These differences in tone will help the students to picture how Juliet could say things at different stages of the play according to her changing mood and point of view.

You Figure It Out: Ask students to stop reading the play when Juliet is ordered by her father to marry Paris (end of Act III) and then to improvise the rest of the story. The students not only must create the rest of the plot but also take into consideration the characters they have already met in the play. Moreover, they must be consistent with their characterization and give reasons for any change in character. Many possibilities may be created by the students. Romeo, being told of Juliet's wedding, may arrive in time to stop the wedding as Friar Lawrence confesses everything about their secret wedding. Juliet might also get sick and the wedding would be postponed with enough time for Romeo to return to Verona, jump the fence, and carry Juliet back to Mantua with him. Perhaps Friar Lawrence may speak with the Prince, tell him the truth, and the Prince might help Juliet get to

Mantua to meet Romeo. Or students might even come up with the same ending of the play. No matter what the students come up with, they should make sure that their characters are consistent with the characters given by the author in the part of the play they have read. Students should be able to give reasons for any character changes and for the way characters acted in their plot. Later on, after reading the play, the students' plot and characterization can be compared to the ones given by Shakespeare. Discussion may focus on the reasons characters acted the way they did both in the play and in the students' plot.

Extrapolation/Expanding a Character:

"What If" Statements: Forcing the students to solve a character's dilemma in terms of the character's own personality can help them to understand and view the characters more clearly. Some specific "what if" statements that might be posed are: "What if the Nurse had not agreed to help Juliet? What if Romeo had not killed Tybalt? What if Friar Lawrence would not marry them? What if Romeo had decided not to return to Verona? What if Romeo had been killed in the fight? Students might think of the following sample answers if they are asked the first question: Juliet could have gone to her mother for help; she could have escaped from home and stayed at Friar Lawrence's cell until her marriage to Romeo; or she

could have killed herself earlier, unable to live without Romeo.

"If I Were" Statements: Choose one character and ask the students to complete the statement "If I were" by putting themselves in the place of the character. For example, one possible answer to "If I were Lady Capulet" is "I would have postponed the wedding for a mourning period of six months." The students should be prepared to explain and discuss their answers to the statement in terms of their own personalitites. In this specific case, the students might say that for them celebrations should not take place so near a death in the family; they are not appropriate according to their own social standards. The students should then compare their explanation to the character's behavior in the play in relationship to the situation they choose.

Role Playing: Let the students reread the scene where Tybalt tells Capulet about Romeo's presence at the dance. Ask them to note down anything that might come to their minds in terms of the characterization of any of the characters involved in the scene. Then ask if they would make any changes in them, and have the students enact the scene adding the changes they noted down. After the improvisation, discuss the scene and compare it with the actual scene from the play. In the particular scene mentioned above, students may

imagine Capulet allowing Tybalt to throw Romeo out of his house and the party ending in a fight. Another possibility is Tybalt disobeying Capulet, or Capulet himself going to Romeo and asking him to please leave the house. The students should be able to explain their reasons for making these changes, and how these changes are consistent with the characters' personalities.

* * *

Consistency is not a major problem in The Matchmaker. Of the main characters only Horace Vandergelder changes and he does it gradually. As a matter of fact, all the characters around him and their actions are the determining factors in this change. Horace changes from the stingy, practical man of the opening of the play to the generous, "foolish" man of the last scene. Instrumental in this change are Dolly, the shrewd and ambitious widow who wants to marry him, and the other secondary characters who unknowingly help her "catch" Horace. The exercises mentioned in this chapter can help the students visualize the characters of the play, especially Horace (and his change) and Dolly (and her scheming mind).

Preoccupation: This exercise can help explain Dolly's feelings about Horace's continual talk about getting a wife without considering her as one of the candidates. Ask the students to improvise a similar situation to the scene between Dolly and Horace at the

Harmonia Gardens Restaurant. For example, a widower and a female friend are dining at a restaurant. He is worried because he is getting old and needs a woman to take care of him and his house during his last years. His friend wants to marry him but he does not know it. She agrees to help him find a woman to marry, but while he talks about the kind of woman that he would like to have, she is planning how to get him for herself.

Physical Irritation: This exercise may help illustrate how Irene felt when Horace went to visit her and she had Cornelius and Barnaby hiding in her shop. Ask the students to represent a situation with a girl who has an extremely jealous boyfriend. One day an old friend of hers, whom she has not seen for a long time, comes to visit her. After a few minutes her boyfriend and her mother arrive to visit her. Knowing how jealous her boyfriend is and that she is alone with her friend in the house, she hides him in the living room closet. Knowing what a jealous man can do, the friend spends most of the scene trying to leave the house without being seen by the two visitors. The scene can end in two ways. As in the play, the boyfriend might find out that there is somebody else in the house. On the other hand, the friend might be able to leave. Either way, only the girl and the audience will share the secret of the friend's visit and the apprehension of what

may happen if he is found by the boyfriend.

Character Agility A: Given the same categories discussed in Romeo and Juliet, students might come up with the following examples for Dolly in a thirty-second time period:

Character: Dolly

1. Animal: Fox
2. Image: Train
3. Rhythm: Staccato
4. Prop: Purse
5. Costume Piece: Cameo
6. Color: Light Brown

The students should be able to explain their answers to the exercise in terms of the character of the play. In this example, the students can explain that Dolly is as shrewd as a fox, as powerful and singularly minded as a train on its one track headed for a specific place, and who is always on the move, again like a train clicking over the rails (staccato). She will always have a purse in which to keep her money and wear a large, antique cameo to give the impression of richness to other people. Dolly would dress in light brown, a color appropriate for a woman her age and not as dark as the color widows wear. The choice of color may indicate that even though she is a widow, she is not grief-stricken and is available for any decent proposals. The picture that these categories

can form in the students' minds can help them to understand the character and her actions during the play.

On the other hand, teachers can give the students the characteristics according to the categories and let them identify the character. The following description is a possible example of this variation.

1. Animal: Puppy
2. Image: Doll
3. Rhythm: Slow (andante)
4. Prop: Measuring Tape
5. Costume Piece: Apron
6. Color: Pink

Character: [Minnie]

The characteristics should be as specific as possible for the students to recognize and identify the character. The teacher can argue that Minnie was as tame as a puppy, as fragile as a doll, and as innocent as the pink color suggests. In her work, she would wear an apron, use a measuring tape, and do her chores slowly, but she is always sure of what she is doing.

Character Agility B: Given the category of animal and the character of Horace, the students might come up with examples like: lion, tiger, gorilla, and puppy. The students will have to explain how these different types of animals can present a complete picture of Horace. Perhaps, they may explain, Horace thought he was the

king of both town and house (lion), fierce as a tiger, and aggressive toward all the people around him (gorilla), but at the end he seems as tame as a puppy in Dolly's hands.

Word Tone: Vandergelder suffers a transformation through the play. For the students to be able to understand his shifting personality, the tone of what he says is important. By asking them to say words like "Marry me" with different tones, the students might be able to grasp better Vandergelder's attitudes in different parts of the play. Suggested tones are: anger (refusal to let Ermengarde marry Ambrose), flattery, (visit to Irene's hat shop), denial (answer to Dolly's proposition), happiness (sending niece away to prevent wedding), anxiety (inability to find his wallet), questioning (proposal to Dolly), and resignation (acceptance of Dolly's conditions.

You Figure It Out: Ask the students to stop reading at the end of Act III when everybody leaves the restaurant and have them improvise the rest of the story. Their improvisation should be consistent with what they have read and what they know about the characters. This knowledge of the characterization of the play will lead them to the development of the last act. Possibilities are: Dolly making Horace marry her if she decided to pay the restaurant bill, Ambrose making Horace swear

that he would allow him to marry Ermengarde if he pays the restaurant bill, or Horace deciding to marry Flora because of the help she gave him with his niece. Whatever the students come up with, they should be able to defend and explain their choices in terms of the characters and how their personalities influence the way they act in the given situation. After reading the last act of the play, the students should be able to compare and contrast their own ending with the one given by the playwright. They should be able to explain the differences, if any, from the end of the play and why they decided to act as they did. The students should also discuss what traits lead them to make characters act as they did in their improvisation, as opposed to the way they acted in the play.

Extrapolation/Expanding a Character:

"What If" Statements: Present the students with the following question: What if Dolly had not decided to help Ambrose and Ermengarde? The students may suggest that the couple would have eloped or secretly married anyway at Flora's house. Forcing the students to solve a character's dilemma not present in the story, but within the character's personality, may help them understand the character of the play better.

"If I Were" Statements: Given the character of Horace, the students might answer the statement "If I

were Horace" in different ways according to their own personalities. Two possibilities are: I would have let my niece marry Ambrose or I would have married Flora instead of Dolly. The students should be prepared to explain and discuss their answers to the statement in terms of their own views and attitudes. They can later compare their explanations to the character's behavior in the play.

Role Playing: Let the students reread the scene between Horace and Cornelius in the first act where Cornelius is "promoted" to chief clerk but still does not have any free days. Ask them to note down any thing that might enter their minds while reading the scene. Students then enact the scene including any changes they might have come up while rereading the scene. After the improvisation, let the students discuss the scene as they did it and how it differs with the scene as it is in the play. Perhaps they may decide that Cornelius should resign or that Horace should give him at least Sundays free or even a raise. The students should be able to explain these changes in both plot and characters and how these changes are consistent with the character's personalities.

Costuming the Characters: The way people dress is a key to our recognition and description of them. Characters are not an exception, and they should be

dressed according to their personalities. In Shakespeare, this is not as important since actors of the time wore the best they could find even if they were portraying a servant. Today, this is no longer so. Thus, by asking the students to "dress" the characters, we are also asking them to describe and analyze their personalities. For example, if we ask the students to "dress" Horace, they may decide on a conventional gray suit, white shirt, black socks and shoes, chain watch, and no other jewelry. The students should be able to explain each of their choices in terms of the characters. Since Horace is so old fashioned and stingy, he would wear a traditional gray suit and black shoes which he could match with anything. He would also wear a traditional white shirt and carry a watch to prevent his employees from coming late to work, wasting time, or leaving early. Therefore, the students both picture the characters of a play and arrive at a fundamental concept of their personality.

* * *

Characters, like people, vary according to their own personal background and culture. These variations, ranging from point of view to sets of values, may give students difficulty when trying to teach character to people from a culture other than the one presented in the play. Marckwardt's suggestion (Place of Literature, 46) of presenting people in situations where they act

and react according to their cultures is a valid one. However, in order for the students to achieve this presentation, they must have a clear and concise picture of the characters they are representing. For example, a Puerto Rican student might use the "reinita" instead of using "puppy" to describe Minnie (see "Character Agility A," page 72). As always, the reasons for this choice would be most important. For instance, the "reinita" is a small, tame, singing bird, just like Minnie who is small, docile, and happy with her life. A discussion should follow in which students debate the picture both animals create in their minds. This discussion would focus on the relevance of the image created in the students' minds by choosing a known bird in their culture, as compared with a small puppy that might be chosen in another culture. In the same manner, all of the foregoing exercises may provide the ESL students with clear images from their own culture in addition to helping them to visualize the way a character dresses, acts, talks, and thinks. Students, thus, get an overall picture of the "person" behind the character. This personalization of the character in the students' terms makes it relevant to the ESL students and easier for them to relate the character to the situations presented in the play.

* * *

As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, there are four main characteristics a good character must have: usefulness, propriety, truthfulness, and consistency. Unfortunately, these four characteristics are abstractions, none are concrete, general items we can point at for every character. Nevertheless, in order for the students to know if any character does indeed have these characteristics, they must visualize and concretize them. Creative dramatics and the exercises discussed in this chapter help the students create the visual image they need to understand and describe any given characters. The image will include both external and internal aspects of the character's individual personality. Having this picture in their minds, students will then have begun to discover the four traits necessary to any successful characterization.

SETTING AND MOOD

I. SETTING

The setting of a play refers not only to the play's locale (place), but also to the town, country, and era and to the social position and background of the "people" involved in the play. All these aspects are essential to the chosen scenery of a play in order to present a complete background for the development of the action.

In earlier plays, like Romeo and Juliet, a structured and detailed scenery was not necessary to represent setting. Conventions of the time and the language used by the author provided the audience with the necessary information for them to "see" the setting of the play. As technical devices were developed and improved, people and playwrights relied less and less on the language of the play and more and more in the devices used to situate the play. Aspects such as props, lighting effects (not available in Shakespeare's time), sound effects, and music have become part of modern play settings and thus of present theatrical productions. Having become accustomed to all these technical devices, students may need some extra help to picture the setting of a play they read. The following theatrical exercises may be the answer to the students' needs.

Listening to the Environment (Spolin, 55): All students sit quietly for one minute and listen to the sounds of the environment. They then compare the sounds they have heard. In the case of teaching a specific play, the teacher may bring a tape of sounds likely to be heard in that play's environments. The students would discuss the sounds heard and where and why those sounds could be heard. This discussion may focus not only on the locale but also on the type of people who would attend the place in terms of social position and background.

What's Beyond (Spolin, "What's Beyond A," 102): A player is to leave or enter the room. The "stage" of the classroom is only used to walk through, and the players must communicate through their actions where they are coming from and where they are going. These actions must be specific and clear enough for the audience to guess both places. For example, a woman comes into the room. She closes the door, puts her purse and keys on a small table, and takes her shoes off. She yawns, stretches her body, turns the light off, and goes off stage through another door. Without the use of words, the player is telling us that she is coming home late at night and that she is tired and going to the other room to sleep.

Quick Selection Exercise for Where (Spolin, 116-117): Ask the students to write down three objects which

indicate a selected place. The objects should be inanimate physical objects; something characters will use in this setting. At the same time the chosen objects should be essential to create the picture of the setting. After the students are ready, compare and discuss their lists. For example, if a church is selected, some students may choose objects such as an altar, a pulpit, and some chairs. Others may select pews, a pulpit, and an organ. These lists are read aloud and compared in terms of practicality for the activities that take place in that locale and for the persons who use that locale. Some of the other places suggested by Spolin in her book are: a hospital, a cave, a coffee shop, and a library. The purpose of this exercise is to teach the students the importance of selectivity of details.

When discussing a specific play, the teacher can use a locale from the play. The students can compare their lists with the actual objects used in the play and discuss the differences in terms of usefulness to the play, plot, and characters.

Setting the Stage: An interesting way to lead the students to create a mental picture of a play's setting and to know how much they understand of the different aspects included in the setting is to ask them to choose and describe a locale where the action would take place if it were real. Another way to present the question

is by asking them to assume the role of a director of the play who must describe the appropriate setting for the production. Students should be able to describe the setting in detail and give their reasons for their choices. In this explanation, the relationship between setting, plot, and characters must be included. In this way, the setting of the play would be relevant and meaningful for them. Usually the students select places known to them or places they think might have the characteristics and details needed to achieve the author's requirements. Examples will be given later in the chapter when the specific plays are discussed.

* * *

Romeo and Juliet, as mentioned before, was written in an era where language and action provided the necessary information about setting. A few props were used, music was only used when it was part of the plot, and no lighting effects existed. Only one fixed set represented all the different "scenery" needed for the development of the plot, and it was only through the actors' words and their actions that the audience could identify "the place."

Our students, products of the technological twentieth century, are not accustomed to imagining "the place" of a scene. Television, movies, and even theatrical productions have given them complete and detailed scenery

for every imaginable locale. As a result, the envisioning of place has become difficult for them when they merely read a dramatic text. The use of these setting exercise dramatics will direct the attention of our students toward the specific locales in which Romeo and Juliet takes place and thus help them to envision the setting of the play.

Listening to the Environment: Teachers can tape sixteenth century music and ask their students to listen to it before reading the play. They can then discuss what they have heard and how it differs from today's music. By differentiating this music from contemporary music, a conversation about the era the music was written in should follow. If the information does not arise spontaneously from the students, the teacher should be prepared to show the students how much is revealed about our own era by its music. It follows, then, that the students should be able to reconstruct earlier eras from their music. After reading the play, the teacher may play the music again. After hearing it for the second time, students may discuss how this music and the talk about the era helped them understand the play's setting better.

What's Beyond?: This exercise is very useful for any Shakespearean play since these scenes usually start with somebody coming on stage and end with somebody

leaving; yet no specific locales appear in the text. In Romeo and Juliet, for example, only Verona and Mantua are given as setting and no stage directions are specific as to where the scenes take place in the towns. A scene which the students might choose to use is where Lady Capulet tells Juliet about Paris' intentions to marry her. Later she exits to continue with the party's preparations. The students may imagine a scene where a mother, noticeably busy, enters a room, gestures something to her daughter, and leaves the room again. What the daughter says is not important; what is really important is the visualization of the mother's actions. Indications about party preparations may include her wiping of her hands on an apron, pushing her hair back, and the "hurry" of her body movements before she "exits" the classroom stage.

Quick Selection Exercise for Where: The teacher can give the students a place like a vault. Students might then come up with things such as a coffin, a torch, and an altar. This list can be later compared to the actual objects present in the Capulet's vault at the end of the play. Students should be able to explain their choices in comparison with the author's choices. In a Shakespearean play, this exercise is useful for the students to get a picture of what the locale would look like. Remember, only the bare minimum of objects

needed for the scene were used by Shakespeare. Even though the characters often describe what they are "seeing" on stage, the objects were not really there. In Romeo and Juliet, for example, Juliet's description of the vault is very detailed, but the items she so vividly describes are not physically present on stage to be acually seen by the audience.

Setting the Stage: Asking the students to set the play in known places for them can be useful to help understand setting, especially in a play like Romeo and Juliet where no specific setting is presented by the author for each scene. For instance, students might compare the Capulet's house to an old, big, multiple-storied mansion from the turn of the century. This type of house is big enough to have a ballroom, and old enough to belong to a past era nearer to the play's action than to the student's time. This "setting" of the stage can be accomplished with all the different "sets" of the play. The students' answers will help the teacher know how much of the author's descriptions the students grasped.

* * *

The Matchmaker's setting is quite different from Romeo and Juliet's. Not only does the play belong to a different era where technical devices were more advanced than in Shakespeare's, but also the author requires a different detailed set for every act. Each of the four

sets are clearly described. Specific pieces of furniture, props, and the function of each and every entrance to the sets are defined by Wilder. He even cues lighting effects by clearly specifying which act is to occur during the morning, which in the afternoon, and which at night. Unlike Shakespeare, Wilder used a great deal of furniture and many props as he tried to create a natural and credible setting for his audience who would not believe the scene at the Harmonia Gardens Restaurant without the folding screen. Yet, this same dependence on visual aspects may hinder the students' abilities to picture the setting of a play they read. In Shakespeare's days, it would have been sufficient for the actors to mention a folding screen between both tables. They would then act as if it were really there in order for the audience to accept its presence. The above mentioned exercises help the students transfer the detailed description given by the author into the visual picture they are accustomed to receive from television and movies.

Listening to the Environment: Among other things, a tape of sounds usually heard in a restaurant may be used by the teacher. The sounds may include background music, people chatting, people ordering food, and clinking of glasses and plates. After carefully listening to the tape, students should talk about and compare what they have heard. What type of restaurant it is and what

type of people would go to it? For example, in the case of The Matchmaker, the teacher may bring a tape of sounds people may hear in an elegant restaurant as opposed to what may be heard in an ordinary cafeteria. This exercise will help students to see the higher class kind of restaurant the Harmonia Gardens is and what type of behavior is expected from its customers.

Quick Selection for Where: Give the students a place like a hat shop and let them list three objects to be found in it. They might come up with items such as hats, headbases, and counter. Let them compare their lists with the actual objects included in the play.

Setting the Stage: After reading but before discussing every act, students should be asked to describe the setting they would give to each one. They may mention places near or familiar to them or those that are completely imagined places. For example, they may set the Harmonia Gardens Restaurant on top of a hill from whose terrace you may see the city. The exclusive terrace would be elegantly furnished and decorated. In the case of The Matchmaker, this exercise is very useful due to the variety of sets the play asks for. Every act has a different set and each one is equally complicated in terms of the amount of details Wilder requires. In their descriptions, students should be aware of the importance that lighting effects and both scenery and hand props

have in the development of the action. For example, Act I takes place in Vandergelder's living room during the morning. It is essential for the students to understand the importance of the time of the day to what happens in the act. Vandergelder is being shaved, he is preparing himself for a long trip, and his employees are opening the store. The effectiveness of Act III depends on the stage use of the folding screen (scene prop) and the wallet (hand prop). It is important for the students to understand the function of such details and to incorporate them into their descriptions. The identification of such essential props, furnishings, and lighting effects will help the students to have a more complete view of what setting is.

* * *

These exercises are useful to ESL students because, by using places familiar to them as locales of the play, or by comparing their own choices with those that are stated in the play, students can better relate to the actions and the characters. Both the setting and the plot become relevant to their experience as the students move from what is culturally known to that which is culturally strange. This relevance helps the students understand the play in terms of their own background and point of view.

* * *

Setting exercises help students to visualize the locale where the action takes place. In the case of Shakespeare, envisioning the setting is equally an exercise in understanding the actual words of his plays since his scenes derive from the lines of the actor. In any play, however, the visualizing of the setting makes it easier for students to localize the action and the characters' position in the action and thus, ultimately, to understand the development of the plot.

II. MOOD

The teaching of mood is usually not attempted in introductory literature classes because the concept is thought to be too complex and therefore more suited to students in advanced classes and/or literature majors. Nevertheless, mood is essential to the understanding of a play. Defined as "the frame of mind or state of feeling created by the setting, the lines spoken by the characters, or a particular situation or sequence of events" (Redman, Drama, 356), mood encompasses all the elements previously discussed in the study. In a theatrical performance, music, other sound effects, and lighting effects may help the actors to transmit the play's mood to the audience. For example, a well known melodrama, Sorry, Wrong Number, makes use of lighting and sound effects to transmit the atmosphere of suspense necessary

to believe the action of the play. An air of mystery created by poor lighting, the sounds of a train passing nearby or of the footsteps coming up the stairs, and the inability to get a telephone message to somebody outside the room, dominates the entire play and influences both the main character's actions and the audience's reactions to the play. However, these elements are not outwardly in evidence when our students read the play. They must fill this absence by using their imaginations to grasp the feeling behind the whole play.

As it is such a difficult element to understand, not many exercises to teach mood have been developed. Spolin's book presents a few but her exercises, although effective for acting classes, are not very useful for a regular English classroom. These exercises require the use of technical equipment and some advanced acting abilities which will probably not be found in our students. Nevertheless, some simple exercises can be devised to explain mood in the classroom. The following may help students open their minds to the perception of mood.

Moody Music: Using a tape recorder, the teacher should play at least two minutes of music for the class. After a pause, the teacher should play it again. This time, ask the students to list anything--events, concrete objects, persons--that they associate with the mood music. When the tape is over and the students have finished

making their lists, items on the lists should be discussed, especially as to why the students have chosen those items and why certain feelings are evoked either by the music (including the lyrics) or the items on the list. As the students attempt to describe the feelings created by the music, they are beginning to explore the moods of the song. For example, the song "Yesterday," may evoke feelings of sadness and loneliness and the students' lists might then include items such as the loss of a dear person or animal, a rainy day, sunset, or childhood. Students should be able to explain their choices and why each one evokes the feeling of sadness and/or loneliness. Not every student, for example, may see "childhood" as a time of loneliness. Using the exercise to teach the mood of a play, the teacher can play music that presumably evokes a similar mood to that of the play. Although students may list different objects depending on their background and experiences, their choices for an overall mood should be approximately the same. In any case, a discussion of different choices will still be illuminating. A variation of the exercise asks the students to bring to class the music that they think evokes the mood of the play. The students' choices can then be played and compared to the teacher's. Everyone, including the teacher, should be able to explain their choices.

Moody Visuals: Instead of bringing music to class, the teacher may bring in pictures, photographs, or reproductions of famous paintings that depict a given mood. For example, given the mood "astonishment," students may bring in a picture of a working housewife who comes home after a day's work to find everything in its place, dinner served, and her husband and four kids patiently waiting for her. For the discussion of a play, or any particular scene in a play, the students may be asked to bring in a picture that they feel evokes the mood of the play or scene. The teacher may also encourage students to create their own cartoon or collages evoking the mood perceived by them from the chosen play or scene. As always, it is the discussion and comparison of the students' choices that is most important to this kind of exercise.

Moody Scene: The teacher gives the students a number of characters, a situation, and a minimal setting. Then the students are given a mood and asked to describe the specific details of the setting and what actions may take place according to the given mood. For example, if a man and a woman alone in an enclosure are to be associated with the mood "fear," the students might come up with two people in an old abandoned basement near an insane asylum. The place has only the bare minimum of objects, most of which are broken. The man is an

escaped maniac from the asylum and has just kidnapped one of the hospital's nurses. To prevent the nurse from screaming, the man has tied the woman to a chair and is threatening her with a seven inch kitchen knife found in the place. If, instead the teacher designates "happiness" as the chosen mood, a different description with the same given elements can be expected. In this case, the couple may be two newlyweds celebrating their wedding. The room may be completely and tastefully furnished. There may be flowers on top of a table and a big window through which sunlight and fresh air stream into the room. To complete the picture, the bridegroom has just opened a bottle of champagne and the couple is clinking their cups while they kiss each other. In either description, students should at least provide the room's color, costumes for the characters, and the furniture of the room. In the case of a play to be discussed, the teacher may give the students the play's setting and mood (or any particular scene's setting and mood) and ask them to describe special details or effects that might further enhance the given mood.

* * *

The mood of Romeo and Juliet is difficult to explain to students. There are some "happy" scenes like Juliet's acceptance of Romeo's proposal, and the subsequent wedding scene. There are also some "hopeful" scenes like Friar

Lawrence's explanation of his plan to Juliet. And, of course, there are some "tragic" scenes like Juliet's death. However, a feeling of fatalism and sadness permeates the entire play. The following exercises should help students to understand this overall feeling.

Moody Music: Both the teacher and the students should bring in some music that is generally considered to be sad or fatalistic. As the choices are heard, each person should be able to explain why that music evokes a feeling of sadness in him or her and how it matches the feeling evoked by the play. In the case of Romeo and Juliet, where a major motion picture has been filmed based on the play, the teacher may bring the picture's soundtrack to class. If the soundtrack is not identified either by the teacher or the students, the students may list items such as a couple's farewell because the man is going to war, a beautiful lake on a cloudy day, a loved person going into surgery for a delicate and dangerous operation, or simply a rainy day. The point of the exercise is not that the explanations will be accurate and exact; rather it is the exploration of the various moods from the music that is illuminating for the discussion of the play.

Moody Visuals: Choosing, for example, the last scene, the teacher may ask the students to bring in pictures of Lord Montague's mood when he discovers his

son's death a few minutes after knowing of his wife's death ("horror"). Perhaps a student will bring in a newspaper clipping with a picture of a man run over by a truck. As the picture is passed around and commented on, the feeling evoked by the picture may then be compared to the feeling evoked by the final scene. Other students may bring in reproductions of paintings, either classical or modern, that depict a full range of "horrifying" incidents. Together, the class and the teacher may explore the feelings associated with "horror" and discuss which ones are to be associated with the mood of the play and which ones should be excluded.

Moody Scene: A good setting for this exercise is Juliet's room. Ask students to describe it as seen by Juliet during her wedding night ("in love") and the way she saw it the night she drank the potion("in despair"). The first night the room can be pink and brightly lit. Flowers may be found on top of a table, the bed with white sheets would be neatly arranged, and Juliet would be wearing a long, but simple, white gown. On the other hand, the night Juliet drank the potion, the room would have a gloomy atmosphere given by gray walls and dark colored lighting. No flowers are to be found in the room and different gowns--those that Juliet was to try on for her wedding the next day--could be found in disarray on top of the bed. She, however, would be wearing an

old, long, dark-colored dress which would match her feelings that night.

* * *

The Matchmaker's mood is less complex than Romeo and Juliet's. The whole play is pervaded with a sense of humor. Even the scenes with a threatening element, like the scene where Barnaby and Cornelius are hiding in the hat shop while Vandergelder is visiting Irene, have a feeling of humorous mischief behind them. The mood exercises can be used to point out the humor inherent in each and every situation of the play.

Moody Music: The students can be asked to bring to class any "humorous" music they feel may serve as the soundtrack of the play. A wide variety of music should be expected as, for example, the soundtrack of the musical Hello Dolly, a motion picture based on The Matchmaker. Another possibility might be the music that accompanies Charlie Chaplin's sketches. Whatever their choices are, the students should be able to discuss them comparatively in order to select the music that best represents the play's humorous mood.

Moody Visuals: The teacher may choose a particular scene and ask the students to bring in pictures that best evoke the specific mood of the scene. For example, if the teacher chooses the scene where Vandergelder begs Dolly to marry him, the students might find it funny

that Vandergelder proposes to someone who is the opposite of what he first desired. He wanted a practical, economical, and subdued person; instead he gets a generous, ambitious, and clever wife. One possible picture students might bring to class would be a cartoon of a hunter being hunted by his prey. A lion would be wearing a hunting cap and carrying the gun while the hunter could be either tied down or walking in front of the gun. If students posses some drawing ability, they might attempt to create their own cartoons, in this case of a person (Vandergelder) being trapped by his own needs. Students might also attempt to create collages based on the mood stipulated by the teacher.

As an alternative, the teacher can choose the scene and ask the students to bring any pictures, photographs, or reproductions of paintings which show the mood of such scene. In this case, the teacher will not tell the students the mood of the scene and will let them find the material according to what they feel is the mood of the scene.

Moody Scene: Ask the students to color the rooms and to furnish the sets according to the act's mood. They can also describe the characters' costumes according to the scene and mood. In a play like The Matchmaker that has four different sets, the students may be asked to design their own settings for a scene or act in keeping

with the mood agreed upon by the class and the teacher. They may, and should, do it differently from the author, but they must consider both practicality for action and the chosen mood as they design their own scenes. For example, students may decide that Vandergelder would never go to a fancy restaurant such as the Harmonia Gardens. They may design instead a humbler restaurant with just a few tables separated by folding screens. The walls would be decorated with framed posters and an old air conditioner would ventilate the room. The posters would set the mood. If the chosen mood is "aggressive," as Vandergelder felt towards Ambrose, students might decide on karate posters to decorate the room. If, on the other hand, Dolly's actions toward Vandergelder are seen to convey the idea of "pursuit," hunting posters--perhaps of British fox hunters or of wild game such as lions, crocodiles, etc.--might be chosen to cover the walls. These set designs, however, do not have to be drawn. Students may describe orally in class how they would arrange the sets and what specific details they would use in terms of furnishing, color, props, costume, and lighting according to the desired mood and necessities of the act or scene.

* * *

ESL students may benefit greatly from these exercises since they help these students to "see" something which is neither concrete nor directly and obviously conveyed by the play's language. By visualizing the element of mood, students may better understand the whole feeling of the play and why some characters act as they do. These actions, which may at first seem strange to the students, may be influenced by how such a mood is interpreted in the author's culture. Furthermore, after discussing and exploring the various moods of a play, as well as the range of possibilities for interpreting a single mood--especially ESL students--may more fully appreciate the influence of mood upon culture. For example, Puerto Ricans often view spinsters stereotypically as grouchy, old, extremely organized persons who live lonely lives. When one visits such a house, one gets the feeling of restraint, of not daring to touch anything. This is certainly not the feeling one gets in Flora's house. Her room is filled with knicknacks, family portraits, bird cages, and shawls, and her sofa is covered with very brightly colored cushions. Entering the room, a feeling of liberty and familiarity is emphasized by Flora's cordial attitude. Where she is permissive, all too ready to serve as a matchmaker, and too friendly, a Puerto Rican spinster may be strict, serious, and firm. Obviously a world of cultural differences exists in the

term "spinster"; these differences may be made clear by mood exercises.

* * *

Thus mood is a complex element to teach. It affects the author's choice of words, details, and characters. Because it is intangible, it must be visualized in order to be understood by the audience. Although the teaching of mood may be attempted at an introductory level, normally mood should be left to more advanced classes or to literature majors, and for this reason only a few exercises of a general nature have been given in the study. As difficult as the concept is, however, some attempt should be made to teach it through the use of creative dramatics. If the students are successful in perceiving a play's mood, they will have reached an extremely subtle stage in their perception and experience of drama.

CONCLUSIONS

This study was begun with the idea of providing teachers with specific theatrical activities to teach the different elements of drama. By simultaneously using such theatrical techniques and the more traditional method of literary analysis, students would be helped both to understand and to experience a play they have read. The activities discussed throughout the study are geared towards making the students "do" things rather than merely to talk about them. Through the use of these activities, students may concretize by action and word, what they usually only read. This visualizing of the different elements will help both the students and the teacher to make up for what Moffett (Teaching, 113) calls the lack of preparation for play teaching. A cumulative exercise that tests the effectiveness of all the foregoing techniques of creative dramatics is to ask the students to represent a brief play of their own. They can either invent it or create a parody of some existing work. This "play" should have a logical sequence of events and a conflict to be solved. Each and every character of this "play" must be complete, that is the audience watching the "play" must be able to believe in the characters as both physically and emotionally real. The characters

should have the four characteristics discussed earlier in the study--usefulness, truthfulness to life, propriety, and consistency--, and the setting of this "play" must have the basic elements--furnishings, props, etc.--for the development of the plot. Details chosen and used for both setting and characters will be determined by the chosen mood of the "play." After the presentation is given, the students should hand in a written analysis of their "play" explaining all the pertinent elements. Student actors should also hand in a detailed description of the characters including aspects such as the character's favorite clothes, color, and music. Furthermore, students should explain the character's actions in terms of both external and internal characteristics and motives.

The activities discussed in this study emphasize not only the picturing of different dramatic elements in order to better prepare students to read and experience a text, but also the importance of the relevance of these theatrical activities to the students. Relevance is particularly important when dealing with ESL students. The relevance of the situations given to the students to improvise, of the "pictures" of characters and of settings familiar to the students, and of the concretizing of intangible moods, helps to ease out the ESL student over the difficulties presented by a foreign culture and language.

A decisive factor in the effective use of the method is the teacher. To help students to accept and use these techniques successfully, teachers must first of all understand, agree with, and like the methods presented by this study. Students should feel that their teachers are part of the dramatic group. Teachers must feel free to participate enthusiastically in the activities as well as to introduce and guide them. However, the students must work by themselves; they must do the exercises to benefit from them. Teachers must always have in mind that the final purpose of the exercises is not performance itself, nor should they push the students to present a polished performance. Ultimately, the purpose of the activities is always to help the students to "see" and understand better the plays they read. With this in mind, teachers should pay close attention to the students' work, always ready to stop and redirect them when and if they move too far from the dramatic text that is being discussed.

Finally, by using the techniques of creative dramatics described in this study to help students to visualize, choose, and defend their ideas in regards to a play's plot, character, setting, and mood, we are letting the students discover the elements themselves. In summary, we are giving the students the tools to read, understand and experience plays on their own. If they

learn to internalize the methods presented here, they will become their own teachers.

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Albright, H.D., William P. Halstead and Lee Mitchell. Principles of Theatre Art. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1968.

Altenbernd, Lynn and Leslie L. Lewis. A Handbook for the the Study of Drama. New York: Macmillan Co., 1966.

Bacon, Wallace A. Oral Interpretation and the Teaching of Literature in Secondary Schools. ED 098642 ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication Skills. Urbana, Ill.: Speech Communication Association, New York, N. Y., 1974.

Betancourt, Francisco. "From ESL to Literature." Unpublished course materials. Univ. of Puerto Rico, Mayaguez Campus, 1980.

Butcher, S. H. Aristotle's Theory of Poetry and Fine Art. New York: Dover Publications Inc., 1951.

Day, Cristopher. "Resources-Teachers in Theatre in Education." Speech and Drama, 24 (1975), 10-14.

Devine, Mary Elizabeth and Constance M. Clark. "The Stanislavski System as a Tool for Teaching Dramatic Literature." College English, 38 (1976), 15-24.

Dixon, John. Growth Through English: Set in the Perspectives of the Seventies. Great Britain: Oxford Univ. Press, 1975.

Donahue, Meghan and Adelaide Heyde Parsons. "The Use of Roleplay to Overcome Cultural Fatigue." TESOL Quarterly, 16 (1982), 359-363.

Donlan, Don. "Drama and the Three Stages of Literature." English Journal, 66 (1977), 74-76.

Duke, Charles R. Creative Dramatics and English Teaching. Urbana, Ill.: National Council of Teachers of English, 1974.

Eaves, Morris. "The Real Thing: A Plan for Producing Shakespeare in the Classroom." College English, 31

(1974), 463-472.

Ehrlich, Harriet W. "Creative Dramatics as a Classroom Teaching Technique." Elementary English, 51 (1974), 75-80.

---------- and Patricia Grasty, ed. Creative Dramatics Handbook. ED 077018. Philadelphia School District, Pa.: Office of Early Childhood Programs, 1971.

Gaskill, William H. "The Teaching of Intermediate Reading in the ESL Classroom." In Teaching English as a Second or Foreign Language. Marianne Celce-Murcia and Lois McIntosh, ed. Towley: Newbury House Publishers Inc., 1979, pp. 144-154.

Hallett, Charles. "A Shakespeare Workshop." College English, 32 (1971), 790-796.

Hardy, Sister Marie Paula S. S. L. "Drama in the Classroom." Elementary English, 51 (1974), 94-102.

Hoetker, James and Alan Engelsman. Teaching Guide: Shakespeare's Julius Caesar. New York: Scholastic Book Services, 1973.

Jeffrey, Phyllis Rienstra. "The Teaching of Literature Through Performance." Communication Education, 25 (1976), 132-137.

Johnson, Patricia. "Effects on Reading Comprehension of Language Complexity and Cultural Background of a Text." TESOL Quarterly, 15 (1981), 169-181.

Lasser, Michael and William Dalton. "Theater in the Classroom." The Clearing House, 49 (1976), 221-223.

Lenz, Carolyn R. S. "Drama in the Classroom." College Composition and Communication, 27 (1976), 204-207.

Manna, Tony. "Drama as Happening." English Journal, 64 (1975), 96-100.

Marckwardt, Albert H. The Place of Literature in the Teaching of English as a Second or Foreign Language. Hawaii: Univ. Press of Hawaii, 1978.

Marshall, Madeleine. "Love and Death in Eden: Teaching English Literature to ESL Students." TESOL Quarterly, 13 (1979), 331-338.

Martineau, Stephen. "Beyond Lady Audely's Secret: Drama in the English Department." College English, 36 (1974), 58-74.

Massey, Julie and Stephen Koziol Jr. "Research on Creative Dramatics." The English Journal, 67 (1978), 92-95.

Moffett, James. A Student' Centered Arts Curriculum, Grades K-13: A Handbook for Teachers - 1973 Impression. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1973.

----------. Teaching the Universe of Discourse. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1968.

Moody, H. L. B. The Teaching of Literature. London: Longman Group LTD, 1971.

Morton, Beatrice K. "Creative Drama - A Visit to a Class." English Journal, 62 (1973), 622-627).

McKay, Sandra. "Literature in the ESL Classroom." TESOL Quarterly, 16 (1982), 529-536.

Olson, Elder. Tragedy and the Theory of Drama. Detroit: Wayne State Univ. Press, 1966.

O'Shea, Catherine and Margaret Egan. "A Primer of Drama Techniques for Teaching Literature." The English Journal, 67 (1978), 51-55).

Paden, Frances Freeman. "Theatre Games and the Teaching of English." The English Journal, 67 (1978), 46-50.

Potter, Jonathan. "Liven Up Your Student Dramatics with Commedia Dell' Arte." Media and Methods, September 1980, pp. 47-49.

Povey, John. "The Teaching of Literature in Advanced ESL Classes." In Teaching English as a Second or Foreign Language. Marianne Celce-Murcia and Lois McIntosh, ed. Towley: Newbury House Publishers Inc., 1979, pp. 162-186.

Preminger, Alex, ed. Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics. Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1965.

Ranger, Paul. "A Package of Dramatics Activity." Speech and Drama, 25 (1976), 2-5.

Redman, Crosby E., ed. Drama II. New York: Macmillan Co., 1962.

Reed, Linda. "ERIC/RCS Report: Creative Drama in the Language Arts Program, or 'Catch that Crab Before He Finds a Hole." Elementary English, 51 (1974), 103-111.

Rhodes, Alan. "A Dramatic Approach to Hamlet." Journal of Reading, 19 (1976), 438-441.

Ripley, John. "Drama and the Language Arts: The Experience of Literature and the Literature of Experience." The English Quarterly, 12 (1979), 45-63.

Rosenberg, Helane S. "The Actor/Teacher at the Belgrade." Elementary English, 51 (1974), 45-47.

---------- and Laurence W. Fennelly. "The Actor Teacher: A New Idea from Britain." Education, 96 (1975), 50-53.

Ross, Elinor and Betty D. Roe. "Creative Drama Builds Proficiency in Reading." The Reading Teacher, 30 (1977), 383-387.

Schwartz, Sheila. "Involving Students in the Drama Process, K-12." English Journal, 64 (1975), 32-38.

Seaberg, Dorothy I. and Wanna M. Zinmaster. "What Can Teachers Learn from Directors in the Performing Arts?" Elementary School Journal, 72 (1972), 167-175.

Shakespeare, William. The Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet. In The Riverside Shakespeare. G. Blakemore Evans, textual ed. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1974, pp. 1058-1099.

Shand, G. B. "Classroom as Theatre: A Technique for Shakespeare Teachers." The English Quarterly, 8 (1975), 13-19.

----------. "Theatrical Techniques in Shakespeare Teaching: A Survey." The English Quarterly, 10 (1977), 25-36.

Sharpham, John R. "Some Approaches to Creative Drama at the Secondary Level in England." The Speech Teacher, 24 (1975), 29-36.

Silver, Reneé and Anne Avery. "Experience in Creative Dramatics." The English Quarterly, 5 (1972), 110-114.

Spolin, Viola. Improvisation for the Theater: A Handbook of Teaching and Directing Techniques. Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern Univ. Press, 1983.

Stanford, Gene. "Why Role Playing Fails?" English Journal, 63 (1974), 50-54.

Steffenson, Margaret S., Chitra Joag-Dew, and Richard C. Anderson. "A Cross-Cultural Perspective on Reading Comprehension." Reading Research Quarterly, 15 (1979), 10-29.

Stewig, John Warren. "Creative Drama: More than Story Dramatization." Communication Education, 26 (1977), 189-196.

----------. "Drama: Integral Part of the Language Arts." Elementary English, 51 (1974), 66-71.

Tretler, Lawrence J. "Literature and Playscript: A Primer for English Teachers Who Teach Drama." English Journal, 70 (1981), 45-47.

Weales, Gerald. A Play and Its Parts. New York: Basic Books Inc., 1964.

Wilder, Thornton. The Matchmaker. In Three Plays by Thornton Wilder. New York: Bantam Books, 1961, pp. 139-225.